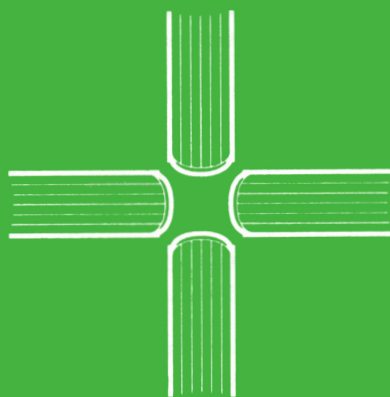


MAY/JUNE 1997 VOLUME 132 NUMBER 5

# LUTHERAN EDUCATION



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- ▶ *Cultural Literacy*
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- ▶ *School As Mission*
- ▶ *Global Education*

# Lutheran Education

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## *In This Issue*

Summer time is made for re-creating and re-charging physical energies and spiritual batteries. Do so with blessings, however the Spirit leads you.

What follows in this issue are some exceedingly thoughtful pieces that are designed for the pace evoked by that lovely word: pondering. Pondering by its very connotation implies a slower pace. Take the articles one day at a time, if you can. Then go back to the ones that especially stimulated your thinking and file them up front for reference as you plan the next year of activity.

*David Rogner* makes a good case for developing cultural literacy among learners in your care, from the very youngest onward to whatever upper limits your ministry designates. Also good for personal soul-searching.

On the other hand, we look to *Aubrey Bougher's* piece on schools as evangelical, Catholic mission. Bougher is pastor/headmaster of an ELCA school on the East coast who gives valuable insights as to what Lutheran schools can be and do from a perspective that is refreshing.

Closely related to the same spirit is *Michael Meissner's* insights as a "pastor of the school" in San Antonio whose eyes have been opened and spirit refreshed from the vigorous outreach potential of the school and congregation he serves.

*Robert Holtz* and *Theodore Heinicke* provide in the one case an empirical study of how science is taught in our schools and in the other how global education can become a dynamic element in the curriculum.

Perhaps it is especially fitting in this season of endings and goodbyes for those going on to other pursuits to include a chapel address by a relatively young faculty member at Concordia Seward who died several days before delivering it. *Bob Hennig* had much to offer the church but no one realized at the time this would be his final contribution.

Not a somber note, really. We are all on pilgrimage. Let the Lord determine the time of its ending. In the meantime: refresh, recreate, and re-furbish!✠

# *Matters Of Opinion*

*Wayne Lucht*

## *Musings On The Home Stretch*

Choosing a suitable title for this, my last “Matters of Opinion” has proved to be more formidable a challenge than I first anticipated.

I have always felt that headings are important. They convey in the fewest possible words the mood of the piece to follow. No matter what the content, the spirit in which it is conveyed is fully as important.

Thus, the first heading that popped into awareness was “A Valediction Forbidding Mourning.” It took only brief thought to realize *that* sounded more than a bit pompous and self-serving.

“Pot Shots I Missed Taking” had its own appeal but also the tang of a bitterness I do not feel or sense. What, then, shall it be?

Settling for what you see above has its own ironic twist. The context, obviously, is horse racing, a sporting event I have never personally witnessed. Oddly, one of the most theologically conservative members of my early faculty days was an avid fan of the Sport of Kings, hardly ever missing the several seasons available in the Chicago area. His excitement peaked in the “home stretch.” It is that spirit that fits this occasion. (The careful reader will note that we have blithely ignored that contradiction of a home stretch’s thundering finish and the more sedate enterprise of musing!)

Historically, this journal has undergone several re-positionings. In the process, I believe it has served its various constituencies quite well over the 132 years of its existence. It is certainly no longer the German-language, solo-written piece it started out to be. The contents of the 132 volumes, in fact, would make for a superb exercise in sociological inference if anyone would be willing to take a crack at it.

Yet changing times force a march into territories not yet clearly mapped out. And that is sufficient cause for excitement in this, my personal “home stretch.” I can hardly wait to hear its new voice for Lutheran education in the next several years, assuming my home stretch lasts long enough to witness it.

Far more important than personal curiosity is the enterprise itself. Lutheran education has taken on many guises in the last generation or so. Yet, the Lutheran church and notably the Missouri Synod has demonstrated a remarkable consistency and steadfastness of purpose that I believe will assure a clear identity in the future.

While we're at it, it must also be said that there is a dark side to Missouri that seems to have some ascendancy in our collective awareness nowadays. The quest for purity of doctrine and practice has littered the field with casualties that do not reflect God's blessings on the enterprise. Indeed, it may be indicative of his withholding boons from our church body which we sorely need to go boldly into the 21st Century.

More needs to be said than this simple generality, but meager commentary will have to suffice for the time being. Clarifying the nature of ministry and the callings of its various servants require intense study, scrutiny, and scholarship as well as a willingness to be iconoclasts in the face of some idolatrous traditions. An example of this, at least in this observer's judgment, is Walther's concept of the various offices of the church all being derivative of the pastoral ministry. That opinion is finding a convergence with that of other Lutheran scholars who find the ordained ministry the absolutely essential ingredient of the magisterium of the church. Somehow, this flurry of interest still begs the question, a haunting one at that, of how to view the offices of other "Teachers of the Church."

Another issue: the future of our schools, especially how they are financed, cries out for attention. How this complex question is answered will go far in defining our schools' role and impact on both church and society.

A third area demanding thought and focus is that of Directors of Christian Education. This vocation has not yet achieved a clear professional identity. The acute need to work at this clarification is evident to insure the health of the church's on-going educational task as well as enhance the morale of the workers.

The home stretch is exciting!

We are thankful that, as far as our present sights serve us, this is not the home stretch of the church or of the society in which it is nested.

But that leaves us with a final thought: We must continue our labors as if, indeed, we are in that Ultimate Home Stretch.✚



David Rogner

## *Cultural Literacy And Lutheran Schools*

I first learned about Picasso in the second grade, when Mrs. Collins showed our class a reproduction of *Two Acrobats With A Dog* and gave me my first lesson in looking at pictures. In the fourth grade I discovered Washington Irving when Mrs. Bonneau read us "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," introducing me to the world of Ichabod Crane. I can still picture the purple mimeographed sheet on which Mr. Guldenstein, my sixth grade teacher, had written out the melody of the "Largo" from *Judas Maccabaeus* so that we could follow along as he played his Handel recording to the class. As an eighth grader I memorized Lincoln's Gettysburg Address because Miss Bahlman--an English teacher who played an important role in fostering my interest in literature--made me do it. To this day I can still recite it reasonably well, thanks to her insistence that I know this American masterpiece.

One of the things which Picasso, Irving, Handel, and Lincoln have in common is that E. D. Hirsch included them in his list of "What Literate Americans Know," the appendix to his 1987 book *Cultural Literacy*. I knew something about each of these people by the time I was thirteen--because teachers I had in Lutheran elementary schools had exposed me to them.

Some readers are sure to be responding: "So what?" Besides making me a potential Jeopardy contestant, of what value is all this trivial information? If E. D. Hirsch is to be believed, this kind of knowledge makes all the difference in the world to the success of our students. As a cautious supporter of Hirschian ideals, I intend to offer a brief summary of his beliefs about "cultural literacy"--in this 10th anniversary year of his book's publication--and then suggest not only why Lutheran school teachers should heed his call, but how they might do it as well. To be even a qualified supporter of Hirsch in my discipline--the leftist-dominated field of literary studies--is to risk denunciation as an elitist, a reactionary, and even a fascist. To advocate the teaching of "American literate culture" in an age of multiculturalism is to risk being accused of the most "politically incorrect" behavior. Despite these dangers, I remain convinced that Hirsch makes a strong case for rethinking educational practices, based not only on evidence Hirsch presents but on my own experiences as student and teacher.

---

*David Rogner is associate professor of English at his alma mater, Concordia University, River Forest.*

In addition to Hirsch's insistence upon the *practical* benefits of teaching cultural literacy, I will further argue that such teaching pushes our students toward lives enriched by things that are "excellent," a pursuit which should flow out of our calling as people of God.

## HIRSCH AND CULTURAL LITERACY

In the minds of many, Hirsch is a crusty, old conservative who waxes nostalgic about the "good old days" of education. When he expanded his agenda in *Cultural Literacy* by publishing dictionaries like *What Your Fourth [or Sixth or Eighth] Grader Should Know*, many saw him as a cultural snob who was out of touch with real elementary classrooms. Progressives condemned him for extolling the virtues of "Dead White European Males" and opposing trends that have opened up the curriculum to different voices. These caricatures of Hirsch stem from a failure to understand his objectives for cultural literacy.

He does not advocate teaching Handel or Irving or Lincoln or Picasso because knowledge about them has any inherent value. Our students should know them, Hirsch states, because literate Americans know them. They also recognize expressions like "what's in a name?" and "wolf in sheep's clothing," terms like McCarthyism and malapropism, concepts like centrifugal force and separation of powers, and places like Valley Forge and Valhalla. Those who lack such information, says Hirsch, are kept from total enfranchisement; doors to full participation in American society are closed. Hirsch asserts that "only by piling up specific, communally shared information can children learn to participate in complex cooperative activities with other members of their community" (xv.). He calls cultural literacy "the only available ticket to full citizenship" (22).

On the broadest level, Hirsch's book is an attack on the progressive educational establishment which has elevated the teaching of "skills" at the expense of "content." Tracing progressive ideas back through John Dewey to the romanticism of Jean Jacques Rousseau, Hirsch recounts how 20th century programs for American education have gradually diminished the amount of shared information which Americans have. They have given students too many choices about what to learn and emphasized "life adjustment" skills at the expense of knowledge. Such programs fail, Hirsch asserts, because "facts and skills are inseparable" (133). Educational ideas of this kind, therefore, rather than being democratic and inclusive, keep many students from the knowledge they need for full participation in literate American culture, which is "not usually anyone's first culture, but . . . ought to be everyone's second" (21).

Hirsch's more specific target is the teaching of reading in American

elementary schools. Since "facts and skills are inseparable," he rejects skills-oriented reading programs which claim that the "skill" of reading can be taught using any reading material, regardless of its content.

Of the many tests and studies he cites, one of the most compelling is an experimental study of the reading abilities of two groups of college students, one at a selective university and the other at a community college. When given a rather simple essay on the nature of friendship, the two groups of students had similar scores for reading rate and comprehension. When given Bruce Catton's essay "Grant and Lee: A Study in Contrasts," which compares the two great Civil War generals, the university students outperform the community college students, not because they have greater reading "skills" but because understanding Catton's essay depends upon some prior knowledge of the Civil War. The better-prepared university students had a "schema" into which they could place the essay; the community college students struggled due to a lack of background information about the Civil War.

"Informationally-deprived" people, states Hirsch, struggle because "although they can read the individual sentences, they can't make sense out of the whole" (40). Hirsch makes his case most bluntly when he asserts: "What distinguishes good readers from poor ones is simply the possession of a lot of diverse, task-specific information" (61).

Having taught Catton's essay to college students, I am not surprised by what Hirsch reports. The importance of "background information" to reading comprehension is borne out to me daily in the college classroom, where students struggle to understand an essay that makes too many assumptions about their prior knowledge. I often teach E. M. Forster's essay "My Wood," which makes a reference to the notion of "a camel going through the eye of a needle." Comprehending this essay depends upon knowing that Biblical allusion to Christ's words, but each year fewer and fewer students seem to recognize it. (Almost no one recognizes Forster's reference to the story of Naboth's vineyard.) These students are not stupid. They can read each of the sentences in Forster's essay. But since every piece of written communication makes some assumptions about what the reader already knows--things that a writer can refer to without having to explain--students' ability to comprehend anything is always connected to background knowledge. What frightens Hirsch, and what seems increasingly true to me with each year of teaching, is that students are finishing twelve years of elementary and secondary schooling with less and less commonly shared information about specific content.

Perhaps some feel that teaching all this "cultural information" is the job of high school and college teachers, not elementary educators. Are Picasso and Irving and Handel inappropriate for second, fourth, or sixth graders? In one of



the most chilling statements in his book, Hirsch states: "Preschool is not too early for starting earnest instruction in literate national culture. Fifth grade is almost too late. Tenth grade usually is too late" (26-27).

According to Hirsch, students without sufficient background information begin to fall behind in reading by about the fourth grade, mostly because the reading task becomes too difficult. They grow frustrated because reading requires them to do too many things at the same time. While the good readers have internalized schema into which they can place the new reading material, the poor readers are lost. Many give up on reading because it has become a burden. If these students make it to college--and many do--they will succeed when asked to read popular essays about family life or dating or "my most frightening experience," but they struggle with "Grant and Lee" and "My Wood" because Catton and Forster make too many assumptions about what they already know.

What are the consequences of cultural illiteracy? For the student, certain educational and vocational doors are forever closed by an inability to operate in the realm of literate culture. The culturally literate have an edge in many professions, being able to read, write, and converse on a level that sets them apart from their peers. Students who lack this knowledge, of course, are not doomed to starvation or a life on the streets. But even active citizenship in a democracy is inhibited by an inability to read the newspaper's editorial page or the essays in *Newsweek*, both of which assume significant background knowledge.

Hirsch fears the societal consequences of cultural illiteracy, calling the lack of shared knowledge a "recipe for cultural fragmentation" (21). As shared knowledge decreases, a kind of "dummying-down" occurs at all levels of American society. If college students can't understand Catton and Forster, textbook publishers create "easy readers" that require no literate knowledge. If citizens don't understand what's going on in the world, television creates "soft news" shows that won't challenge the audience. If we wonder what has happened to political discourse in our country--why we can't hear presidential candidates have a substantive debate on the issues--maybe it's because they know the viewing audience is neither prepared for nor interested in a debate about the issues, which would require too much background information.

One important thing to remember about Hirschian cultural literacy is that it is descriptive, not prescriptive. Hirsch's critics have accused him of privileging a "white elitist culture" at the expense of multicultural objectives. He responds by saying that his "list" is not a collection of *superior* content which people *should* know but rather an objective report of what literate Americans *do* know. He gets his information by looking at magazines, editorial pages, and general-interest books to find out what information is presented *without explanation*.

Although the list of culturally literate information changes over time, it changes very slowly, as people, places, or events gradually fall out of and come into "common knowledge."

Literate people have some awareness of Shakespeare's Hamlet and Julius Caesar, but they also know Martin Luther King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail" and the "I Have a Dream" speech. He includes King not in some politically-correct attempt to be inclusive, but because these works are so widely circulated that literate people know about them.

When educators attempt to help minority students by focusing exclusively on the writers and ideas of their culture (as with the Afrocentric education movement) they tend to prohibit access, Hirsch believes, to the highest levels of the mainstream culture. Hirsch notes how essays from *The Black Panther* newspaper during the civil rights movement are built upon a web of references to texts of mainstream American culture. King's "Birmingham Jail" letter--a masterpiece of American discourse--confuses many of my students today, not because it's imbued with elements of African-American culture that non-black students can't understand but because it's structured upon a network of allusions to literate culture (such as the Bible, the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence).

Literate culture, as everyone's "second culture," does not discriminate against anyone but rather promises enfranchisement for everyone. Learning about other cultures is obviously important, but--as Hirsch claims--it should never be substituted for the teaching of American literate culture.

### **Lutheran Schools And American Culture**

In many ways, the history of Lutheran education in America exemplifies how teaching the literate culture has empowered the disadvantaged. I need look no further than my own family for examples. My late father spent his career as a Lutheran elementary school teacher and principal. Although raised in a working-class home that was often short on money, he spent twelve years in Lutheran elementary and secondary schools, where he acquired an amazing breadth of knowledge about literate American culture.

I remember with great fondness how my father would recite from memory long passages from Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (which, by the way, makes Hirsch's list) because he had been assigned to memorize this long poem at his Lutheran high school. Not surprisingly, Dad's teaching career was characterized by insistence that students learn literate culture, whether that meant knowing the U.S. states and capitals, Gregor Mendel's genetics laws, Longfellow's "Evangeline," or the form of a Bach fugue.

It would be unfair, of course, to equate the ability of Caucasian-Americans like my father to rise from working class roots with the ability of minority students to do so, for the challenges are certainly different. One cannot deny, however, that fluency in literate culture has been the ticket for many successful minority professionals.

In his history of 20th century American education, Hirsch notes that when public schools jumped on the bandwagon of progressive education, private schools tended to resist. As a result, he claims, they have--on the whole--been more effective in teaching literate American culture than their public counterparts. Although I have no empirical evidence to cite, my anecdotal evidence suggests that Lutheran schools--for most of the 20th century--have behaved like the private schools Hirsch cites, following more traditional curricula than those of public schools. I cannot speak with authority about curricula at Lutheran elementary schools today to know whether or not they still excel at teaching cultural literacy. One of my aims for this essay is to encourage Lutheran school faculties to ask themselves that question, become familiar with Hirsch (if they aren't already), and seriously consider the systematic teaching of American literate culture in their classrooms.

One of my colleagues tells the story of an incident that took place about five years ago in a college methods class of soon-to-be elementary teachers. She was suggesting how an interesting unit combining language arts and social studies could be constructed around the historical figure of Pocahontas (someone else, by the way, on Hirsch's list). What she soon discovered was that almost none of the 25 students in the class knew who Pocahontas was. Today, of course, that would not happen, not because schools have beefed up their history curricula, but because Disney has made Pocahontas a household word.

My point is not to criticize this Disney animated film. The issue is whether our students have become almost totally dependent upon the popular media for cultural information that schools once routinely taught. If schools abdicate their role as teachers of content, the mass media will readily supply the content for our students' consumption.

## BEYOND HIRSCH

Hirsch's arguments for improving American education are blatantly practical. He calls cultural literacy an "enabling competence" (137). He wants students to "get ahead," be successful, get good jobs, function as good citizens. He argues that "traditional education . . . outperforms utilitarian education even by utilitarian standards" (126). One enters dangerous territory when one suggests, however, that exposure to art forms often called "high culture" enrich our

students or make them better human beings, mostly because such claims are intangible and immeasurable. They stem from humanist arguments about the humanities that are often rejected by cultural critics today.

Hirsch notes that in the preface to *Everyday Classics* (1917-1922), an anthology used extensively in elementary schools in the early 20th century, editors Thorndike and Baker state that they put in their book "what has become indisputably 'classic,' what, in brief, every child in the land ought to know, because it is good, and because other people know it" (qtd. in Hirsch 131). Hirsch emphasizes teaching cultural literacy for the latter reason. The former reason--to teach something "because it is good"--should also make a claim upon our curriculum building, but here the territory is fraught with peril.

This essay is not the place for analyzing aesthetic arguments about how to make value judgments in art or literature, but I would like to offer a few remarks about "teaching the good." Many critics of traditional education, especially in my field of literary studies, denounce the Western bias of the "classics," calling them a "hegemonic discourse" which excludes minorities and women. The curriculum must be opened up, they argue, so that students are not overpowered by the dominating influence of Western culture.

Some perceptive critics of this debate have noted that the Western/non-Western argument is really a false one. If our students lack knowledge of non-Western culture, it's not because their minds are overfilled with classics of Western art and literature. The discourse which fills their minds and lives is pop culture--the realm of Madonna, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Beavis and Butt-head. One of our missions as educators is not to make blanket condemnations of pop culture but to show our students alternatives to it.

A great danger of pop culture is its apotheosis of the here and now. The best music, art, dance craze, fashion statement, film, or TV program is the one that's happening *right now*. Last week's hit is passe; last month's fashions are out of style. Pop culture subtly preaches that there is no past, nor any important places beyond right here. A case of navel-contemplation can result, in which young people strive to acquire current knowledge that only turns them in on themselves and their narrowly-defined world of pop culture.

Bertrand Russell once argued that the essence of wisdom is "emancipation, as far as possible, from the tyranny of the here and the now" (174). When we discuss with students a Rembrandt painting, a poem by Langston Hughes, or a Bach Brandenburg Concerto, we take them to another place and time. In so doing, we help counter the tyrannizing effects of pop culture. Left to their own devices, our students will inevitably stumble across some "good art" in pop culture, but they are unlikely to find good music, art, and literature from the past. Pulp fiction, after all, is more accessible than Dickens. By taking students

beyond the popular, we decrease their narrowness. They see that the world did not spring to life the day they were born; the sense of other times and places provides a perspective that can lead to wisdom.

Any teacher who has tried to present such works to students under the rubric of "good" has heard the groans and the hostile challenges: "Who says Mozart is better than Madonna?" "Why is this *Macbeth* such a good play? I don't even get it." The problem of aesthetic judgment is a thorny one that philosophers have debated for centuries. Teachers rarely succeed in arousing interest in "good" art by telling students it's good and forcing them to believe it. But if given a sufficient menu of artistic options, students can begin to make comparisons. A good deal of pop culture is simplistic because it is designed to appeal to the lowest common denominator. These artworks are exhausted rather quickly--which may explain why they pass rapidly out of fashion.

As the Christian aesthetician Calvin Seerveld points out, good art is about allusiveness and nuance. Such subtlety, however, is seldom characteristic of pop culture, which doesn't want to place too many demands on the audience. When students engage art of higher quality, they begin to realize that good art is complex, eschews stereotypes and easy explanations, and survives repeated exposure. No student, however, can appreciate an art form she has never seen. Only when students are shown a Van Gogh reproduction or handed a Frost poem or played a Chopin nocturne can a comparative discussion about quality even begin.

To take the case one step further, I would argue that as people of God we are called to pursue the good. After each act of His Genesis creation, God looked at what He had made and called it "good." He then gave the garden for our first parents to tend, calling them to cultivate the creation. As Calvin Seerveld explains, the making and consuming of art is still an act of "cultivating" God's creation. Seerveld believes we are called to a life of "aesthetic obedience," one in which we are not satisfied with kitsch but strive for what is good. What might St. Paul mean by the following exhortation to the Phillippians?

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things. (Phillipians 4:8 NIV)

Surely Paul is not limiting "excellence" or "loveliness" to theological or moral truths. Christian educators are called by God to help students transcend the trivial and trashy by introducing them to stories, songs, pictures, plays, poems, dances, and symphonies that are good. If we fail to give them such things to "think about," they will fill their minds with whatever is at hand.

## SOME CONCLUDING SUGGESTIONS

How should a Lutheran school faculty respond to Hirsch's claims? The worst thing would be to ignore him. Principled people might challenge his claims about education, but they must first engage his arguments. I close with a few suggestions a Lutheran school faculty might consider.

1. To those unfamiliar with Hirsch, put *Cultural Literacy* on your summer reading list; the book is neither long nor difficult. Then locate one of the "dictionaries" Hirsch has compiled which lists knowledge he and his editors deem appropriate for various grade levels. Don't be afraid when *you* don't know something he thinks all sixth-graders should know; I find things on his lists all the time that I don't know. Consider how many of these things get taught in any systematic way in your school and at your grade level.

2. Put Hirsch on the agenda of pre-or-post-school faculty meetings. Debate the merits of his claims about cultural literacy. If his arguments seem compelling, evaluate if and how such culturally literate content is taught in your school. Rather than hoping students might pick up some of this knowledge by chance, make decisions about when and where it will be taught. Utilize the content-strengths of individual teachers, encouraging them to teach content they already know well.

3. Look carefully at what your students read. Could different texts be substituted that teach them reading by giving them something more substantive to read about? If the stories in your classroom are dominated by the "here and now," what could they read that would stretch them beyond themselves, teaching them about other times and places--and giving them factual information that literate Americans have in common?

4. Consider, as a teacher, your own continuing-education experiences. Rather than devoting graduate work or seminar attendance to additional educational theory, why not study additional content? For one year at least, forego the course on "interest centers in the classroom" or the latest in "cooperative learning"--valid experiences though they be--and take a course in American history or art appreciation. Come back next fall energized to tell your students about Harriet Tubman and the underground railroad or show them how Renaissance artists used perspective. Teachers cannot bring content back into a skills-dominated curriculum when they themselves are trained only in the skills of teaching.

I began by calling myself a "cautious supporter" of Hirsch. My reservations involve the relative ease with which his principles could be misused, turned into a weapon rather than an enabler. To prevent this, the teacher must put on the virtue of Christian humility when employing Hirschian principles. "Literate American culture" must never become a "club" with which to beat students who don't know enough. Neither should it be the price of admission to an elitist "club" whose members thumb their noses at the illiterate. It must never become an excuse for belittling the culture of another person. If we as teachers approach with humility the task of helping students know what most literate Americans know--and of giving students cultural experiences which transcend the ephemeral--we not only empower them with practical knowledge but enable them to experience the totality of God's creation (even those "good" creations of people) in all its richness.†

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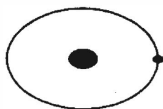
Here is what Albert Camus, fresh from his speech in Stockholm accepting the Nobel Prize for Literature, had to say to his former teacher:

*Dear Monsieur Germain,*

*I let the commotion around me these days subside a bit before speaking to you from the bottom of my heart. I have just been given far too great an honor, one I neither sought nor solicited. But when I heard the news, my first thought, after my mother, was of you. Without you, without the affectionate hand you extended to the small poor child that I was, without your teaching, and your example, none of all this would have happened. I don't make too much of this sort of honor. But at least it gives me an opportunity to tell you what you have been and still are for me, and to assure you that your efforts, your work, and the generous heart you put into it still live in one of your little schoolboys who, despite the years, has never stopped being your grateful pupil. I embrace you with all my heart.*

*--Albert Camus*

A copy of this letter should be kept in every teacher's desk.



*Robert Holtz*

## *Lutheran Elementary School Science: Survey Number Three*

### **Introduction**

Major efforts are underway to modify and improve science education in the United States. Our Lutheran elementary schools should be a part of this movement in order that we also offer quality science education programs.

If we are to improve our programs, we first must have some basic information about our current practices. To that end a questionnaire was sent to a randomly selected group of Lutheran elementary school teachers in March of 1995. This survey was also a follow-up to two prior studies, published in *Lutheran Education*. They were "Lutheran Elementary School Science: A Survey" (May/June 1976) and "Lutheran Elementary School Science Revisited" (May/June 1986).

The 1995 questionnaire was sent to 224 randomly selected Lutheran elementary school teachers. Because three were not deliverable and two teachers were no longer teaching, only 219 questionnaires could have been returned. The first mailing prompted 68 returns and a follow-up letter netted 42 more for a total of 110 returns, a 50% return rate.

### **Results**

Only four of the 110 respondents taught science in other grades in addition to their homeroom. Three others taught just science for grades six-eight. Thus, nearly 94% of the science taught in our Lutheran elementary schools is taught by the regular classroom teacher.

### **Discussion**

The data clearly indicates that our Lutheran elementary teachers have smaller than public school average class sizes. That gives us the opportunity to provide more individualized instruction. It should also be a reminder that we would be better off financially if we could raise those averages to 25 per class.

For Kindergarten classes the average number of minutes for a science class was 19 in 1975 and 17 in 1985 whereas in 1995 it was 24. The first and second grade average class time shows a significant increase from 30 minutes in 1975 and 22 minutes in 1985 to 44 minutes in 1995. The averages for grades five and six were basically the same with 36 minutes in 1975 and 34 in 1985 to 36 in 1995. The times for grades seven and eight were not reported in 1975 and 1985.

Even though the percentage of the school day devoted to science instruction has increased, my personal preference would be to have grades 1-8 spend at least 10% of class time on science instruction. Currently only seventh and eight grades meet that minimum. Grades one and two and five and six are reasonably close, but grades three and four at 6.5% have to improve significantly to reach the 10% goal.

In 1975 44% of the respondents were using texts six years old or older. In 1985 that



dropped dramatically to 18%. However, in 1995 that has slipped to 28%. As any knowledgeable educator knows, a new text does not ensure a quality science program. However, we have 13% of our teachers using texts which are ten or more years old. That makes it more difficult for those teachers to provide a good science program.

The next area studied is the percentage of science class time used for various instructional techniques by the various grade levels. The 1995 figures do not vary significantly from those of 1975 and 1985 except for "true student experimentation" which nearly doubled for grades five to eight since 1985 and "field trips" which are rather low in grades three to eight.

The most disturbing thing about the data is the report that we still rely on the textbook for roughly 50% of all science instruction from grades one - eight. Research has repeatedly indicated the increased retention that results from doing activities as opposed to reading or hearing about them. We would do well to heed the ancient Chinese proverb, "I hear and I forget; I see and I remember; I do and I understand."

There is roughly a 3% increase from grades one - six in time spent on environmental education. With the many environmental issues facing us today, that certainly is appropriate. However, what cannot be determined from the data is how much environmental education takes place in disciplines other than science. It is a mistake to assume all environmental education should take place in science classes. Environmental education needs to be infused into all disciplines because it has connections and implications for all of them.

The data indicating classes held outdoors, when compared to the 1975 and 1985 data, do not show a positive picture. For grades K-4 the average number of minutes of outdoor science instruction is quite similar to the 1975 figures, but they are 27-38% lower than the 1985 figures. The figures for grades 5-8 are about 15% below those of 1985. All of this is true in spite of the fact that all grades, except three and four, average more outdoor sessions. Therefore, less time obviously was spent outdoors per session.

Many research studies have shown that outdoor learning increases student learning and retention. Therefore, one would hope time spent on outdoor studies, including field trips, would increase, not decrease.

It is encouraging to see 34-45% of the fifth-eighth graders are having the opportunity to study at residential camps where they stay for two or three overnights. The counter to that is that over half of our Lutheran elementary school children still are not having any opportunity to study in such a meaningful setting.

It is difficult to imagine teachers developing hands-on approach to "doing science" when so little is spent on science equipment and supplies, particularly for grades K-5. One school which budgeted \$1,500 per grade for grades six-eight significantly raised the grades 6-8 figures. Without that school, the figures for grades six-eight respectively would be \$6.16, \$6.66 per student per year.

These figures very likely go hand-in-hand with the fact that roughly 50% of all science instruction relies on the reading of a science text. The key unanswered question is, do we spend so little for science supplies because teachers prefer to just use text readings most of the time or are teachers being pushed to use texts so much because very little money is available for science supplies and equipment?

Teachers also personally spent their own money to supplement instruction. It is unconscionable for our schools to even allow our teachers to spend as much as they do of their own finances to support our school science programs. It speaks highly of the dedication of these teachers, but school boards and administrators should be embarrassed. About 30% of our teachers spend as much or more for science supplies as their school budgets for these items.

Teachers were also asked to list their greatest need as an elementary school science teacher. The lack of money for supplies ranked high at all grade levels. Preparation time was also a frequently mentioned need. In addition, K-4 teachers in particular would like more science knowledge and ideas for hands-on science activities. It seems workshops at our colleges and universities could remedy this last need.

### **Recommendations**

The writer offers the following recommendations:

1. The average length of science classes for grades three--six should be increased by five to ten minutes.
2. The percentage of school time spent on science for grades kindergarten--six should be approximately ten percent.
3. Many schools should update their science textbooks.
4. Teachers in grades one--eight should reduce textbook usage and increase the usage of science investigations/activities, true student experimentation (grades 4-8), individual projects, and field trips.
5. Schools making no use of camp settings should consider the possibilities of such activities, particularly for grades five--eight.
6. All grade levels, but particularly grades one--five, must increase their budgets for science supplies and equipment.
7. Teachers should not spend their own money to support their schools' science programs.
8. Administrators should review their schools' science programs with their teachers. They should encourage and support their teachers and where necessary stimulate the development of hands-on science program.
9. School boards should encourage and financially support teachers to enroll in continuing education courses which will help improve science instruction in our Lutheran elementary schools.✠



## *The Parochial School As Evangelical Catholic Mission*

### **Introduction**

Ten years ago I accepted the call to become pastor of Christ Church in Rosedale, New York, a small parish in the southeastern corner of Queens in New York City. It was then a congregation of the Lutheran Church in America (now ELCA) beginning to experience urban problems others had previously felt in racial and financial tensions within the congregation, reflective of its community. It had a good liturgical tradition through several pastorates, with almost-weekly eucharist, vestments, an outstanding acolyte corps, observance of all the important festivals, and wrote into its synodical description of its pastoral search, "We want a liturgical pastor." And after several attempts by the bishop to give them something else, they finally got my name and I accepted their call. It has been a happy marriage, and my ten years marks my longest pastorate and their fourth-longest.

But the call was not simply to be pastor of Christ Church. It was a dual call: I was also to be the Headmaster of their parochial school, Christ Lutheran School. This was the challenge of the call, for in my LCA Pennsylvania experience we did not in my time here have such creatures. The duties of headmaster were not only to be the chairman of a monthly board meeting, to which that title occasionally refers. To be Headmaster meant a full and total involvement in the school, being its chief administrator, signing all of its documents, overseeing the principal and faculty, and, also teaching religion in every grade. The school was small, as was the church, and the money in each was tight so they were attempting to get two jobs for the price of one. One-third of my salary at the time of call came from the school-as it does still, although the figures today are significantly more pleasant than 1981.

### **Beginnings**

The early days at Christ Church had less to do with establishing lines of pastoral ministry in the usual sense than to do with understanding how to run a school. I read some manuals quickly. In addition, I was extremely fortunate to have some relationships established very quickly with those who had been involved in Lutheran schools in New York City for some years prior to my arrival. On the school board

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at Christ Church was one woman, Mrs. Catherine E. Bodensky, now Scheblein, who had been the treasurer of the school from before its opening, and is that sort of person who exists in every parish and makes the pastor's job much easier in getting established. She did this for the day to day operations of the school at the very beginning of my pastorate, and also placed me in touch with others who could help lawyers when needed, bankers when needed, and other pastors who had school experience. I also learned much from my predecessor once removed, the Rev. Norman S. Dinkel, now pastor at Trinity-St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Maspeth, Queens, who had established our school in 1965. He disproved the somewhat too-professional and sometimes non-collegial view of ministry that one must distance oneself from one's predecessors. And he also connected me with the ministry of the Rev. Dr. William E. Schiemann, then pastor at Epiphany Lutheran Church and School in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, who was very helpful in his insights and suggestions. I met these pastors through my colleague, the Rev. William A. Coleman, then pastor at St. Peter's, Greenport, New York, and to him I owe a great debt in understanding a philosophy and theology of the Christian school which has developed into that expounded in this paper. So we began. And so we continue.

By definition, a parochial school is a school, that is, a structured place of teaching and learning which is connected to, and a ministry of, a particular parish, "parish" taken in both its congregational and geographical definitions. The term "evangelical" I take to mean based in God's Word of the Gospel in Jesus Christ, and for the use of the term "catholic", I refer you to my sermon, "The Catholic Tradition" published in the Advent, 1990, edition of *The Bride of Christ*.

What I am here presenting is the result of my own ten years of experience. I will refrain from lengthy references to the work of others for that reason, and for the most part will refer to the documents and experiences of my own school, Christ Lutheran School, and make bold to suggest it as a model to others.

## **A Proposed Operating Theology For Schools**

"The primary reason for the existence of a Christian School, in our view, is to see the reality of all creation through the eyes of the faith we profess in Jesus Christ our Lord. We unashamedly teach the "Four Rs"-Reading, 'Riting, 'Rithmetic, and Religion. All that is done centers in Christ, as all creation will discover when He comes again to judge the living and the dead." This is the opening statement of our religious principles and practices document. And it expresses our conviction that a Christian school is to be Christ-centered. As the first paragraph of our general information bulletin each year states, "He is the Center of and Purpose for Christ Lutheran School, and all education is seen as an unfolding of His will of love and mercy for His people, and of the Law of God which governs the universe."

The following are listed as the purposes of our school in its general information bulletin:

- *To train the child to meet the situations of life through faith in God as revealed in Jesus Christ. (Naturally, we rely upon the home to encourage Christ-centered lifestyles).*
- *To instruct our children in the fundamental secular subjects interpreted by the Word of God, thus preparing them for this life as well as the life to come.*
- *To give children an education that will fulfill their lives and provide a firm basis in Christian attitudes, principles, and basic knowledge.*
- *To maintain high standards of academic, moral, and religious training.*
- *To teach and apply useful knowledge and basic skills.*

These citations indicate the Word of God, Jesus Christ, is the supreme authority of our school. One must note as a good Lutheran that that Word is both Law and Gospel, and that a great deal of school work is under the Law. Simply listing the objects and aims of a school indicates that there are all sorts of commands, structures, and disciplines to be followed by all involved, and thus the proper distinction of Law and Gospel must be maintained. One never maintains discipline, structure, and command procedures as though one thereby were earning salvation, although one may be thereby earning a good grade or the right to a certain honor or privilege within the school community. And one does not disdain the use of structure or discipline with a false view of the Gospel that becomes nothing more than mushy sentimentality in the antinomian sense. Without the Law there is no Gospel. The structure itself created by Law is the arena within which the Gospel may be proclaimed. In itself the school is structure of Law, created so that the Gospel may be proclaimed in the life of the community. And it is Law in all three uses.

Thus we might say that the school is using the Law for the sake of the Gospel.

As with any school, we are highly structured with written policies, rules, and procedures for just about any circumstance. While we are free to teach what we want to some degree in terms of what the state calls religion, we nevertheless are also under Caesar in many other respects. And we must guard ourselves from the ever-possible legal action of the modern age; being a church school in no way exempts us from such possibilities. And so we must be adept in the civil use of the law; as Headmaster I need to have some basic working knowledge of what we can and cannot do without getting into trouble with Uncle Sam or-more importantly in New

York-Uncle Mario. In itself a school is a form of government, having a first use of the law not always common to churches without schools. In the punishment of sin, and its identification in various forms, the structure of a school finds the second use also active, and drives home a need for forgiveness, with ample opportunity for teachers, fellow students, and the pastor to apply the Gospel when repentance is evident, and the kids get caught at what they are not supposed to do. In the keeping of the policies, using them as a guide, students are taught to walk in the way of righteousness. Yes, we do try to avoid the pitfalls that this third use is in some way propitiatory or works-righteous. And in the structure of law the announcement of the presence of the Christ is made possible.

### **Teaching Natural/Secular Theology**

In a school of the church, the normal so-called secular subjects must be taught in order for us to be recognized as a school by the state authorities, and they must not only be taught equivalently to the public schools, they must be taught better. I say this not out of false pride-although I am from New York City, and our public school system in some quarters is in disarray-but because the public schools in many ways would rather parochial schools were not there. Simply look at the lobbying attempts by the huge education monopoly and their cohorts in the various teachers' unions every time the president or some other politician announces a proposal for private school aid. We do a better job at half the price per capita, and our students have to pay to get it, over and above what their parents pay in taxes. The public establishment simply does not like this competition. We have to meet their standards, for in New York State, the law indicates the local public school district has some authority over us, seeing that we pass the various academic and other tests that are regularly unmet by their own schools. Our school and most parochial schools gladly accept that challenge and surpass it.

Thus we follow a state curriculum in the so-called secular subjects, and we receive state textbook aid for this, as required by law. How, you should ask, does this differ from the job a public school does except for the fact that you do a better job in the end product because you don't have to accept all the kids that come to you and because you have better discipline? One would not have to be a Christian school simply to have a better end product in the secular subjects (and indeed, because some Christian schools intentionally minister to difficult students, not all do have better results by state standards).

### **Differences**

My answer is that we attempt-and I will be the first to say we do not always succeed in this attempt-to view the teaching of such subjects as the teaching of

natural theology, viewing them under the First Article, an unfolding of the Father's hand and will for us. In orienting teachers, and by repetition in chapel sermons, I attempt to instill the idea of using each lesson to in some way show the sovereignty of God over all of creation-through math, science, spelling, and grammar, as well as religion. Religion is not a subject in a Christian school; it is a way of life, an incense which permeates the place where all else is absorbed, an atmosphere of discovering the handiwork of the creator. There is no handbook or textbook for this, and some teachers sense the ways of doing it better than others, largely dependent on their own faith life.

But one ought see all of life as under the hand of the God we worship, and not simply the time spent in chapel or religion class. To this end, we have within every room a crucifix as well as a flag, and the liturgical calendar of the parish with other signs or symbols of the faith, as well as maps, posters of secular heroes, etc. No room ought be without some reference to Christ, in addition to the crucifix, in art, in sign, in word which relates to the age group using that space. In that space, of course, there is no room for sloppy confusion of Law and Gospel, saying that because Jesus loves you you don't have to study your spelling. But He loves you when you don't, and yet wants you to be the good speller he has created you to be in Him. And so we simply don't try to do a better job at what the public schools do. We try to do it in and under the revelation of God in the natural world, which St. Paul describes in Romans 1 and 2 and Acts 17; God has never left Himself without witness. The natural knowledge is not saving in itself, of course, but leads the hearer/learner to know the God Who has made Himself known in Jesus. The connection we at least attempt to make in Lutheran parochial schools.

In addition, while the Gospel centers on the direct revelation of Jesus Christ, it does not deny, but rather encourages the care of the world the Father of Jesus has given us. Thus, there are times when the sermons with the school children present speak of God's work through the various subjects studied, or when at Rogationtide we go out and plant a tree in the front yard, or speak of God's care of the natural world, or bless animals on St. Francis' Day. For all is under His care, and that is part of the significant difference in the manner in which the world and its subjects are viewed in a parochial school.

It should be noted that our attempts are recognized as being secularly quite successful, and that at least in our school, we come out with grades significantly higher than many public schools in our area, with students qualified to get into specialized high schools rather than the local zoned schools.

### **Teaching Revealed, Christo-centric Theology**

It is well known that the teaching of the Incarnate Word revealed in Jesus Christ is the primary reason for the existence of parish schools. Faith in Christ cannot be

taught under the constitutional provisions forbidding establishment of religion in the public schools, and indeed it ought not be taught there. In a parochial school, however, the Name above all names is not only exhibited, but symbolized, proclaimed, and celebrated regularly as the essence of a Christian parochial school. Here we reveal the person and work of Christ, in liturgy, sermon, and classroom. We make no apology for Jesus as if we have to do this Jesus thing because we are a parochial school, and we're sorry, religion class is just the advertisement. No. No Jesus, No Christian School. We are quite clear about this in terms of teaching, preaching, and practice.

As a School under the Word of God, the nature of that Word in its written form is a matter of primary importance. The Bible is the Word of God in written form, the norm for faith and practice, no matter what our theological hermeneutic. It is with this clear record and proclamation of our salvation that our students must be familiar. Thus, a Bible is a tool students are expected to use. With the exception of Kindergarten, in which we use Bible excerpts and picture books with Bible stories because of the age, each grade receives some form of the Bible and is expected to care for and use it.

New students entering the school in first grade and through fourth receive a copy of the Good News version of the New Testament. We stay with the New Testament in the younger years, and we inherited the Good News version from our predecessor. Because of its limited and rather simple language, we felt it was the best version for use in a school, although it is limited when one gets to some important theological topics in upper grades. We expect students to bring their Bibles to the services of the chapel, and to follow the readings in them, so as to visually train them in finding and following the texts. I know that we ought to be trained to listen to the proclamation in our liturgies, but I feel that for children it is an admirable practice to be able to follow the readings in their own Bible and to have the sense of accomplishment in finding them and following them.

In the classroom, we use scripture early and often. In the last half year of first grade we begin to teach the students how to find passages by book, chapter, and verse, and start with simple texts such as John 3:16. Now we have been reading the stories of the resurrection in Mark. In second grade, we also have been finding passages, copying them down, and discussing them. By third and fourth, we follow particular books, usually a Gospel, to familiarize the students with the story of Jesus. In fifth grade we give a full Bible to the students, as the New Testament by that time is well worn. Biblical work in fifth and sixth grades varies, with more detail, discussion, and finding references in the New Testament texts to the Old.

I was very pleased recently-even though it meant more work for me-when one of the sixth graders found a text that proved me wrong on one of the answers to a test and made me in fairness recorrect all the grades. The course in 7th and 8th is more involved, and uses Scripture references liberally, covering what would normally be



covered in a confirmation class, involving four major chunks of instruction, two each in a year: Liturgy and Bible Outline in one year; and Ethics and Jesus in another, with church history at the end of the Jesus story. For our parishioners, that class counts for confirmation class. But we use the Scripture, both for its proclamation and in order to teach a ready acquaintance in this age of biblical ignorance.

### **Unabashedly Confessional**

And, as you might suspect, we are also unashamedly confessional, that is Evangelical Catholic, what I mean when I say I am a Lutheran. Beginning in 3rd grade we distribute and start memorizing the parts (but not the explanations) of the Small Catechism of Dr. Luther, having learned the Lord's Prayer, already in kindergarten. By the fourth grade age we give first communion, the Ten Commandments, Lord's Prayer, and Apostles' Creed are known by rote-and I see nothing wrong with rote, history's greatest teacher, tedious though it may be. If we can learn A, B, C, and 2X2 by rote we can also in that way learn "I believe..."

We use Luther's Small Catechism in each grade beyond third, and we will occasionally use other published materials which reflect its teaching in the grades. Most of the time, however, we use the catechism itself without "aids".

Allow me to quote the somewhat triumphalistic second paragraph of our religious policies statement which announces this position to all who enter our school: "While we are gladly open to Christians of all denominations, we are also proudly LUTHERAN, and make no apologies for practices that reflect a Lutheran understanding of Christianity. A Lutheran school has as its purpose to nurture the baptized, thus fulfilling one of the promises we make for our children at baptism. Life at Christ Lutheran school revolves around this basic understanding."

Thus the first point of operating theology for an evangelical catholic parochial school would be that the Word of God has authority over all, as witnessed in the both natural and revealed theology and testified to in Scripture and Catechism.

### **Baptism Over All**

And, because the Word is over all, the primary means of grace through which that Word is applied, Holy Baptism, is also over all.

The baptismal life is the end, that is, the goal of the Christian. When we were buried with Christ in baptism we died to this life, and were made alive in the life of the resurrection, as we all know from both Romans 6 and its use in our catechism. In our baptism we have enough to learn our whole life long. Thus, baptism is the great divide of earth: on earth unbaptized we belong only to earth and live within its confines of sin and darkness. Baptized, we still live on earth but no longer to it; we are in, but not of earth. Christians are not only drawn to the font, but from it take the

style and substance for their lives.

One cannot force baptism on the unwilling adult, but the children even of the most faithful adult believers cannot be said to have rationally willed to be baptized, even if, with Luther, we concede a faith existing. Our catechism describes baptismal grace as available even to the young and irrational, and there is no age discrimination for this sacrament in the catholic church. Jesus, in His earthly ministry, was concerned that children be brought to Him, and while it may no longer be appropriate to use that account as a proof text for the validity of infant baptisms, it nevertheless is a powerful argument that infants should not be precluded from that grace in which disciples are made. Who is to say that children ought not be baptized or be disciples? Any argument about understanding enough or falling from grace can apply to adults when baptized as well as the infants of the faithful. And why can children not be members of an eschatological community, as some today seem to claim? Only baptized persons can be considered Christians in the Biblical and confessional sense, for our faith is a result of the sacramental gift of the Holy Spirit working through the Word in Baptism. Faith is not the creation of our own decisions and desires when we get to the "age of reason".

Our view of baptism therefore results in a Christian school in which baptism is required of all students. For such a school is not to invite persons to decide to come to the font, but to instruct those who have been to the font. This perhaps illustrates what I said earlier in the phrase, "Law for the sake of the Gospel."

It is required to enter our school that a student either be baptized and produce suitable certification to that effect, or promise to be baptized within the first year of his or her student life. Students are not required to be Lutheran or to be baptized by us and become a member of our parish, but they are required to be baptized. This is clearly stated both in our interview procedure and literature. Baptism is defined as the use of water with the intent of grace in making disciples done in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, under the authority of some Christian community or church.

One needs to make some careful distinctions here. Baptism saves; the school experience does not. But because the school experience is limited for those who are in the baptismal community of God, our use of baptism as a measuring rod is more crucial to us than admission testing (although we must use such tests too). Even in our ELCA model constitution, means of grace become determinative of legal definitions of congregational membership, voting rights, and other such matters. We apply the same concept to baptism as a requirement for a parochial school, and thus create the possibility of the establishment of a community of the baptized engaging in a common work.

### **Other Religious Expectations**

Other religious expectations follow. Again Law for the sake of the Gospel.

First, we use the old-fashioned system of a church card to require attendance at Sunday School and worship in the congregation to which the student belongs each week. The cards are to be signed by the pastor or priest or minister or whatever as a verification of the students's attendance at worship on a given Sunday, and by the Sunday School or CCD teacher for the educational experience. I tally the cards and they form one third of every student's religion grade, a grade which is used with others for determination of the honor roll.

We have daily services at the school, which we will detail momentarily in the description of the development of community; this, however, is also part of the curriculum and is required. We have already described portions of how theology is taught in the classroom.

The group - identifying procedure in the school, then, is baptism. There is an inclusiveness in letting nothing else create that community but the common event of being washed in the water with the Word, but it is also an exclusivity based on baptism. We freely admit other denominations, though we teach a Lutheran confessional understanding of Christianity. We have a mixture of races, a majority black. And we have some of fairly good means, most of middle class, and a few who are not well-off in terms of this world. Because we must require tuition, this latter exclusivity is a worldly necessity which, if we could raise scholarship funds, would at least in part disappear. Yet, in our goals and basic practices, the group includes the baptized and excludes the non-baptized, but invites the latter to become the former.

Thus the school is to nurture the baptized, and this is what I believe is meant anciently by the term mystagogy. In the atmosphere, and specifically the religion class, the other classes, and the worship life of the school, one's goal is to learn one's baptismal identity and model one's self after Christ more completely. Baptismal dates are remembered in prayer and in artwork in the rooms and in the chapel.

Grounded in the Word and in Baptism, a community centered in Christ Himself is created.✠

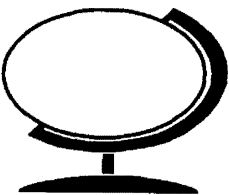
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### **AAL offers Lutheran schools challenge grants for computers**

APPLETON, Wis. (March 3, 1997)--Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL) is offering challenge grants up to \$500 for Lutheran elementary and high schools to purchase computer hardware and software.

To be eligible, Lutheran schools must be recognized by a national Lutheran church body and must teach children in at least three grade levels.

For more information on the AAL Challenge Grant for Computer Hardware and Software, please call the AAL Church and Education Resources Customer Service Team at 1-800-236-3736, ext. 4909.



*Theodore Heinicke*

## *Global Education for Lutheran Schools: Additional Thoughts*

*(Editor's Note: Ted Heinicke introduced the topic of Global education in the March/April 1990 issue of the journal. What follows are extended comments.)*

### **The Global Village**

Many of the abstract concepts and much of the mind-boggling data that is encountered in global studies are too complex and too distantly removed from the experiential world of elementary age students to be easily grasped. By reducing the complexity, by limiting the data, by using concrete illustrations which are part of their experiences, the teacher can help children learn much of significance about their world. By developing the analogy of "The Global Village" the teacher can translate global demographic and international concerns into something the pupils can deal with. Students can be led to an appreciation of human diversity and an understanding of the linkages and interdependencies of all who live on this globe. This global village will have those characteristics which make it a microcosm of the world. A study of the conditions of the inhabitants of this village will facilitate comparing and contrasting developing and developed nations and can be the basis for an in-depth study of development.

We begin by reducing the population of the world from more than 5 billion people to a small village of just 100 people. In this village the major human variables found in the world are proportionately represented. Here are some facts about these villagers.

Most of the villagers are non-white; most are farmers and fisherman; most are poor.

Most are non-Christian.

Only 20 of the 100 villagers are Christian.

Fewer than half have ever heard of Jesus.

11 are Moslem.

9 are Hindu.

5 are Buddhist.

3 practice Shintoism.

Twenty of these villagers (the richest fifth) enjoy an annual income in excess of \$9,470 per capita. The poorest twenty try to get by on an annual income of \$206 (a ratio of 46 to one). The income gap between the two groups is becoming wider year

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*Theodore Heinicke is emeritus professor of Concordia College, St. Paul, Minnesota.*

by year.

Five of the villagers are Americans. Their annual per capita income is more than \$15,000. These five villagers control 25% of the village's wealth. Even the poorest of these five Americans lives in comfort and luxury undreamed of by the poorest twenty villagers.

The population in the poorer section of the village is growing three times faster than that of the richest section. (Annual growth rate in more developed regions: 0.6%; in less developed countries: 2.0%. Population growth is both a cause and an effect of poverty.)

The richest twenty villagers have a life expectancy that is 21 years longer than the poorest twenty (74 years vs. 53 years).

Nineteen of the richest twenty are literate, while only eight of the poorest twenty can read and write (97% vs. 42%).

Government education expenditures for the richest twenty is 83 times as much as for the poorest twenty.

Government health care expenditures for the richest twenty is 216 times as much as for the poorest twenty.

The richest twenty consume fifty times more of the earth's non-renewable resources per person than do the poorest twenty.

The richest twenty consume half again as many calories per day as do the poorest twenty. In the rich section of the village there is an over-abundance and great variety of food, and much of it goes to waste. At the same time many of the poor villagers suffer from malnutrition, and have little prospect of ever having an adequate food supply. Crop failure, floods and other natural disasters contribute to hunger, but its root cause is poverty. There is plenty of food to supply the needs of all the villagers, but the poor cannot afford to buy it. Hunger is a chronic condition for 12 of the villagers (1/8 of the population).

### Notes:

Hunger and malnutrition cause brain damage and permanent serious physical injury to thousands of children every year, and lead to the death of 40,000 children a day--almost 15,000,000 a year.

The annual cost of maintaining a British or American pet cat is more than the average annual income of one billion people who live in the world's 15 poorest nations.

### Social Action

Lutheran schools are committed to providing students with the knowledge, skills,

and attitudes necessary for functioning as effective Christian citizens in their community, state, nation, and world. A good citizen is one who is involved in the improvement of the human condition. This includes participation in the political decision-making process and in other activities that address social needs.

Learning that is not acted upon is often incomplete. Values, if real, will find expression in behaviors. Programs of global education will alert pupils to human needs that have global dimensions. One of the best ways of changing adverse conditions in society is to become involved personally. Elementary children can and should become personally and actively involved in areas of concern that they are capable of addressing. Teachers and students together will look for opportunities to do something about the needs that have been identified. Following are some suggestions.

### **Foreign Mission Concerns**

In the study of any people or country the emphasis at the elementary level is on the human condition. In the Christian school the spiritual condition and needs of people are a primary concern. All people are in need of God's grace and salvation.

- Secure a copy of the Synod's mission projects catalog, *Sharing the Good News*. Many mission projects and mission education materials appropriate for elementary age students are described.
- Correspond with missionary families. Pray for them. Remember them on birthdays and other special days with cards and other tokens of appreciations. (Remember, they are your representatives.)
- If a mission has special needs, such as books and supplies for the mission school, collect or purchase the materials and arrange for shipping.
- Chapel offerings and "Hearts for Jesus" offerings may be designated for a particular mission.
- Involve families and friends in saving "Stamps for Missions."

### **Environmental Concerns**

Pupils will learn that many environmental problems know no community or national boundaries. They have an international character, and to be effectively addressed they must be the concern of all. As stewards of God's gifts in nature, the pupils can learn to participate actively in the improvement of environmental conditions.

- Become directly involved in recycling and environmental clean-up activities. Make posters to promote these activities.
- Write to newspapers (letters to the editor) to influence public opinion positively.
- To influence laws, zoning ordinances, etc., write to persons holding political offices.

### **World Hunger, Poverty, and Disaster**

When they study the developing Third World countries, students will become aware of the issues of poverty and hunger. Some schools have successfully tried "fasting meals" to raise the students' level of sensitivity and empathy for the world's impoverished. Children learn what Jesus meant when He said, "I was hungry and you fed me."

- Write to the Synod's Board for *Social Ministry Services for the Social Ministry and World Relief Resource Catalog* (1988). Many resources helpful in implementing social action projects are described in this catalog.
- Collect canned and staple food products for food shelves.
- As a classroom or school-wide project, collect offerings for Lutheran World Relief.
- Designate the offering of a school program (musical, operetta, play, basketball game) for world relief.
- Pray for the victims of disaster (eg. Flood victims in Bangladesh; hurricane victims). Consider ways of providing physical assistance.
- With the help of the Parent Teacher League, arrange a money raising event (bake sale, garage sale), with the proceeds designated for a world hunger project or for disaster relief.
- As a class project gather usable clothing and household items for a charitable thrift store.
- Involve students in Red Cross projects.
- Have students gather information about other private voluntary organizations, such as Save the Children and CARE. Share findings with the class.

## Concerns About Prejudice And Discrimination

Understanding and acceptance of the culturally different are basic goals of global education. People often find it easier to accept people who are at a distance than those who are nearby. Evidences of cultural and social prejudice and discrimination are found in many communities. Through personal involvement pupils can learn and practice what it means to love one's neighbor and to "help and be a friend to him/her in every need."

- Write welcome letters to immigrants (refugees) from other countries who have come to the community. Can the students and their families help with any of their personal needs?
- Pupils will look for opportunities to speak up for those who are the victims of prejudice (Eighth Commandment: "Speak well of him/her.").
- Letters to the editor might be in place if there is evidence of discrimination in the community. These might help to influence public opinion and lead toward the improvement of a negative situation.

## A Final Word

The ultimate goal of Christian education is to lead people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. As children grow spiritually, they will seek to express their faith by works of love. Often they have deep feelings. As they study issues confronting global society today, many children and youth display the zeal of reformers, desiring to right the world's ills. They want to share their faith, to erase injustice, to put an end to wars, and to save the environment. In their idealism they find it difficult to accept the fact that perfect solutions are seldom if ever found in this imperfect world.

Teachers and other concerned adults will help to provide opportunities to harness students' enthusiasm and channel their zeal into socially and morally responsible activities through which they can give expression to their convictions. Through involvement in Christian service activities they can share their faith, and give expression to commitments to the preservation of God-given life and to the improvement of the quality of life for all people.†

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## *Teaching, Baptizing, And Making Disciples*

I crept into the back pew of our church to watch our school's kindergartners prepare for their Christmas musical. The teachers had all the children lined up in neat rows, rehearsing their songs. Right in the middle of "Joy To The World," a five year old girl walked in a few minutes late. Not sure what to do, she just stood there at the doorway.

Margie Hinojosa, one of our kindergarten teachers, immediately saw her, walked up to her with outstretched arms, and led her to her place with all the other children. The young girl, with a huge smile on her face and a shine in her eyes, added her precious voice to the chorus singing praises to our newborn king.

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran School in San Antonio, Texas, is blessed to be one of 2000 Lutheran Schools in North America fulfilling the Great Commission imperative to go and make disciples, baptizing, and teaching. Because half of the children enrolled in our school--260 children this year--are not active members of *any* Christian congregation, Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church considers its school the congregation's first mission priority.

Every year, hundreds of students who don't know Christ step onto our school grounds. Spiritually, they are often times confused, having little or no guidance and direction from home. That's when teachers like Margie step in, taking them by the hand and gently leading them to know their Savior. In time, the Holy Spirit works faith in their heart, and one by one these children join the family of true believers.

Never before has the evidence of that ministry been so visible as this past January 22nd. On that day, a total of sixteen people were baptized during a school chapel service. Fourteen of these were students from the school, one a little sister, and one a mother of two of the students.

As these people came forward, one by one, to be baptized, it was living proof that a school can be a very powerful tool in reaching those who may otherwise never hear the message of Christ.

A school actively engaged in ministry doesn't just happen by accident. From the beginning, the mind set of Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran school has been one of outreach. "Many schools were established with the thinking that 'we need a school so that our kids can get a quality Christian education,'" says school principal Tim Eickstead. "Our thinking was to use the school as a tool to reach out to the community with the message of Christ."

That emphasis is clearly evident in the statistics. Out of the 515 students enrolled this year, only 56 are members of the congregation. The school is a representative cross-section of the community around it, encompassing people of many races, economic levels, and religious backgrounds.

Teachers clearly see themselves on the front lines, fighting to bring Christ into the lives of students who may otherwise never hear the good news. At parent orientation teachers find out which students are not yet baptized and make special efforts throughout the year to reach out to those students and their families.

As a sign of its support and common vision, the church recently officially declared the school its number one mission priority, and backed that up by giving teachers a salary bonus beyond their usual raise. "We see our teachers as missionaries and our school as a mission field. How appropriate it is, then, to use mission dollars to support teachers in their work," says senior pastor, Daniel Mueller.

Perhaps the greatest evidence of the church's commitment to the school as a mission field was reflected in the call recently extended to me to become their Associate Pastor. I was told to consider myself a "missionary at large" to the school, with a primary focus on outreach to the school children and their families.

As I became involved in the life of the school, it became very evident that the mission field was right at our doorstep. The unique feature of this mission field is that unchurched people are literally paying us to teach their children about Christ. Those children turn out to be our greatest witnesses as they often become the spiritual leaders of their family.

Principal Tim Eickstead adds, "The children take home the excitement of Christ and want to share it with their family. It might start with just a table prayer or a Jesus song that they learned in chapel. Eventually, some of the children 'wear down' their parents and convince them to take them to church and Sunday School." The process is at times slow, but many families have gradually come to know their Lord through the witness of our school.

Many of the blessings of a Lutheran school aren't immediately evident. By its very nature, a school's main job is "planting and watering." But, by God's grace, there are times when a school is able to make a clear "harvest" for the Lord. For us, sixteen new souls this month testify to the importance of a school ministry. Hundreds more are standing at the door, hesitant, but just waiting for someone to take them by the hand and lead them to the Lord.

Is a school ministry worth it? I pondered that question in the back row of our church that day. For that five year old girl and her teacher, as well as many other just like them, the answer is a resounding "Yes!"✠

Bob Hennig

Compassion



*Chapel Service: Concordia, Seward. 27 August 1996. Based on John 11:35*

*Editor's Note: Bob Hennig, a well-loved professor at Concordia, Seward, was scheduled to give the chapel address which follows on 27 August 1996. The Lord called him home nine days earlier in Atlanta, Georgia. Those who knew him often used the word compassionate to describe him. The undelivered chapel address reflects that very word and will edify us all.*

Our meditation this morning is based on the 35th verse of the eleventh chapter of the Gospel of John where we read: "Jesus wept." Here ends the reading. Please be seated.

I am supposed to be talking with you about Romans 11:13-15 and 29-32. There's only one little problem. I don't understand those verses. I was worried until I remembered what Martin Luther once wrote: "...where one does not understand it (the reading), pass that by and glorify God." (If you don't believe me, it's recorded on page 295 in the front of your hymnal.) Well, that is what I'm doing--passing by the Roman's text. I want to talk about John 11:35. Yes, the shortest verse in the Bible--just two words--but it is one of my favorites. "Jesus wept."

When Jesus learns of the death of His friend Lazarus, we are told, "He weeps." A couple verses earlier recount that Jesus "...groaned in spirit and was troubled" when He saw the grief on Mary's face, the anguish in the eyes of Lazarus' friends. Our grief touches God. How easy it would have been for Jesus to pass by on the other side of this human tragedy. (After all, He knew that Lazarus was in heaven.) How simple it would have been for Him to shrug His shoulders and say that this was somehow the will of God. No. He was deeply moved. He was no doubt frustrated by that calamity we call death, angry as He always was (and still is) at any misfortune that devastates the lives of God's people. That's how Jesus felt. And He responded to their pain in compassion, crying with them, and then raising Lazarus from the dead.

But in doing that, Jesus did more than simply perform a miracle for His substantial audience. He reached out at the most personal level to a specific person in a crowd of humanity. Generalized love is adequate for generalized group situations; but Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha, could not have benefitted if Jesus had just climbed on a large rock and yelled, "God loves all of you." No, Jesus, God and man, showed His compassion through the recognition of shared

humanness, through the identification with the pain of the other. You see, compassion is a state in which something does matter; compassion is the opposite of apathy. "Compassion"--the Latin roots of which are "com" and "pati", meaning to "suffer with." Jesus suffers with us in our heartache today; He experiences our aching, blinding pain as He walks with us in our humanness.

I am told that the famous American anthropologist Margaret Mead once asked a group of colleagues what the most definitive sign of humanness was. One suggested taming of fire, or use of primitive tools, or the domestication of animals. She continued to shake her head "No." Finally, when the suggestions died down, she dramatically raised a large human femur bone she had secured from an archaeological dig site. It was evident that the owner had experienced a bad break; however, equally obvious was the healing that had occurred around the break. Margaret Mead explained that, in her studies, this was the most important sign of humanness, not to be found in the animal kingdom. The owner of that broken femur was not left to starve or be ravaged by wild beasts in his defenseless state. Someone obviously showed him compassion until his leg healed.

And compassion must have a focus. I do not like the Nike slogan "Just do it!" Aside from the prurient *double entendre*, the message suggests totally unfocused action. It is reminiscent of sixties hoopla; no genuine dedication to action. Tolstoy tells of Russian ladies who would cry at the theater but were oblivious to their own coachman sitting outside in the freezing cold. Action without focus is simply hollow sentimentality; it is glorying in the fact that I have emotion. Compassion is focused; it is always compassion about something or someone.

Those of you who have the misfortune of taking a class with me know that we always begin with a five minute review of "what's happening in the world." I find it interesting that we can, for example, casually comment on the reported 500,000 who died in terrible ethnic warfare between the Hutu and Tutsi of Rwanda, but then be overcome with grief when we hear of the suffering of a loved one. We clearly cannot be compassionate in the abstract. In the Gospel accounts, we find that Jesus calls His disciples specifically by name, He tells Zacchaeus to come down from his hiding place, He touches the blind man's eyes, He shares a glass of water with the woman at the well, He weeps when He learns of the death of Lazarus, and from the cross He personally assures the thief of his salvation, forgives His crucifiers and releases His mother into the compassionate care of John. *Compassion needs a target.*

And compassion is what is missing today. Compassion denotes a relationship of concern when the other's existence matters to you; a relationship of dedication, taking the form of being willing to delight in or, in ultimate terms, to suffer for the other. Compassion is the refusal to accept emptiness, though it face one on every side; the dogged insistence on human dignity, though it be violated on every side.

The greatest threat we face today is not revolt as some feared but apathy, uninvolvedness and the resultant grasping for external stimulants. Compassion is the antidote.

But talking the talk is different from walking the walk. Several years ago, some social psychologists devised a clever experiment testing what they called "bystander intervention." Here's the setting. A researcher, posing as a conference organizer, would race into the room of a fourth year seminary student and explain that the expected speaker at a luncheon had been unable to come and now they were without a presenter. Would the seminarian be willing to lead a discussion on the topic on the Good Samaritan? Immediately the seminarian agreed and began hurriedly to gather a few supplemental materials. With profound gratitude, the researcher would identify where the luncheon was taking place and then explain that it would be quickest if the seminarian would take a short cut through an alley. With that, the researcher explained that he would return immediately to the luncheon and let the participants know that an alternate speaker had been found. Can you guess what happened? As the seminarian raced to the supposed luncheon presentation, he met an actor in the alley calling out for help. Did the seminarian stop to help? No, he was already late to his presentation on the Good Samaritan!

When Christ was on this earth in physical form, He was an untiring champion for human rights and social justice. Walking with Him must have been like watching our Olympic "dream team" play; He would trounce the opposition and we could all bask in the glory, congratulating each other with high fives all around. If He were to return to earth for a day, what would He attack? I think He would probably try to move the day a little closer when the rich and privileged have to live by the same standards as the poor and the outcast. He would focus on teaching us to simplify our lives so we could look beyond the clutter and into people's eyes and hearts. He would try to stop the next war before it happens. He would want to hold politicians to their glorious promises. I think He would also encourage us not to lose the rights gained by women in this country. And I think He would spend a good deal of time among us here at Concordia as we go through a painful process of parting from friends and colleagues.

But He is not physically among us. And the temptation is so great to atrophy in the absence of our ultimate champion. But, of course, He has not left. He is present in those of us who can work for change; He is also present in those who need our help. And this is my prayer--that you and I are there, caring for God's world and God's people when we are called to action. *Amen.*

Let us pray:

Lord of all, with so much bitterness abroad in our country and in the

world, may we who own the name of Christ show abroad Thy love.

We pray for a broader vision of the needs of all and a deeper compassion to fill those needs; for a planting of the seeds of concern for all humanity in our hearts; for a tapping of the wells of generosity.

Help us to live together as people who have been forgiven a great debt.

Help us to be gentle, walking softly with one another.

Help us to be understanding, lest we add to the world's sorrow or cause to flow one needless tear.

Help us to stand for what is right, not because it may yield dividends later, but because it is right now.

Help us to be as anxious that the rights of others shall be recognized as we are that our own shall be established.

Help us to be as eager to forgive others as we are to seek forgiveness.

Help us to know no barriers of creed or race, that our love may be like Thine--a love that sees all as Thy children and our brothers.

God, help us all to be ministers of mercy and ambassadors of kindness for Jesus' sake. *Amen.*

Now, chapel is over, but the service is just beginning...✠

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### **Five Treats That Won't Spoil Your Kids**

- Showering them with lots of hugs and kisses.
- Giving them presents when you want to.
- Planning activities that make them feel that they are the center of attention.
- Comforting them when they are upset.
- Making them feel that you believe they are the most special kids in the world.

--*Child* (December/January 1996)

# *Administrative Talk*

*Glen Kuck*

## *Administration And Debilitation*

I was reading a story to our kindergarten class recently. As I neared the end of the book, I stopped and asked the students how they thought the story would end. Many hands went up, and I called on a girl named Rashetta. She went into great detail about how she thought the story would conclude. I was amazed at how creatively she crafted an ending. When she finished, I proceeded to read the rest of the book. I was anxious to see what ending the author chose. It ended exactly the way Rashetta said it would. I was astounded at how accurate she was, especially because the story had a surprise ending. I then asked her how she was able to guess so well how the story would end. She said, "Because you read us that story a couple of months ago." The rest of the class nodded their agreement.

I drew two conclusions from this episode. One was that those kindergartners have good memories. The other was that mine suffers from random power outages.

While the incident wasn't cause for me to get some kind of neurological exam, it did make me reflect upon the passage of time and how unkind it can be. Being an administrator takes its toll. How could I not remember reading that story to them? Am I so busy with other things I can't even remember a story I've read? Am I getting that forgetful? Being an administrator can be a bit debilitating.

School leaders have demanding jobs. When they leave school at the end of a long day, they bring their work home with them for the evening. They have plenty of worries. They know that they have to make decisions and that they're responsible for the consequences of those decisions.

Few occupations expose workers to as many people in such densely populated buildings for so long as those vocations related to schools. And it's the administrator's job to make sure all those people work together toward a common goal.

There are always problems in need of solutions. And there are so many publics from which to hear. One principal kept a goldfish bowl on his desk. He said he wanted something around him that opened its mouth without complaining about something.

It's no wonder administrators may occasionally feel mentally or physically debilitated. There are easier ways to earn a living.

There are easier ways to earn a living, but perhaps there aren't many that offer as many opportunities to enrich the lives of as many people. There is research

which indicates that Lutheran schools make significant, positive differences in people's lives.(1) And certainly, administrators play a key role in how their schools bring about these differences. Yet, even if there were no formal studies, the positive impact made by Lutheran schools, their teachers, and their administrators would be obvious. Lutheran administrators have their personal storehouses of memories for students and families they've helped, lives they've turned around, and ways in which the Holy Spirit has worked through them.

There are no perfect professions. Each has its drawbacks. "Life is like a blanket too short," Marion Howard once said. "You pull it up and your toes rebel; you yank it down and shivers meander about your shoulder; but cheerful folks manage to draw their knees up and pass a very comfortable night."

Administrators tend to "draw up their knees" a lot. Each finds ways to cope with the demands of the job. One of those ways is to realize that behind all the long hours, the stress, and the disappointments are children like Rashetta. They still listen intently to stories they've heard before, still want to learn, and still depend on you, the administrator, to create an environment in which they can flourish.

Like teaching, being an administrator is a tough job. Doing it right takes a lot out of a person. But working with God's children is a privilege. Maybe it's OK to have forgotten a story or two along the way.†

#### **End Note:**

(1) See *A Portrait Of Lutheran Schools*. Search Institute, Minneapolis. 1994.

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### **Teachers Dressing With Class: Power ties replace T-shirts**

Clothes don't make the teacher, but they can set the tone of a classroom. After abandoning his neckties during the relaxed 1970s, Joe Catalano now wears them again when teaching his sixth grade class at Niagara Middle School in Niagara Falls, New York. He finds that his students are less talkative and more attentive when he wears a dress shirt and tie.

The recent efforts of school districts to mandate dress codes for students appear to be having a trickle-up effect on teachers, according to *Education Week*. Although teachers have generally resisted mandatory dress codes for themselves, many faculties work out a consensus on what to wear. That often means saving jeans and T-shirts for the backyard and donning businesslike attire for the classroom. Teachers hope that this will show their high expectations for students and project a positive image of education. "We want to make sure we are modeling the same behaviors we are asking students to demonstrate," comments Jan Noble, head of the Colorado Springs Education Association.

--*Christian Home & School*, March/April 1997



# *Children At Worship*

*Craig Sale*

## *Making The Journey: Resources For Piano Teachers*

*Editor's Note: The following is a derivative from conversations with various musicians who are alarmed at the difficulty of recruiting future church musicians who have limited keyboard experience. It occurred to some that a number of our classroom teachers may be in a position to offer keyboard instruction but are intimidated by a lack of "know-how"; thus, Craig Sales' article.*

**M**any readers have found themselves approached about teaching piano lessons. Whether your training in piano pedagogy is extensive or non-existent you find yourself embarking on a voyage of constant discovery bearing the tremendous responsibility of laying the musical foundation for young students.

The journey of piano teaching need not be one of isolation and guesswork. There are many avenues to explore in becoming a better teacher and many resources to keep you fresh and informed.

### **Continuing Education**

Many colleges and universities offer courses in piano pedagogy and some, like Concordia University/River Forest, offer a non-degree curriculum leading to a Certificate in Piano Pedagogy. Check with your local colleges to see if they offer such courses and if they are available to non-degree students.

Workshops are another great opportunity. They only take a one-day commitment, are packed with information and materials, and are very affordable. Many educational institutions offer regular workshops for teachers. Make sure you are on their mailing list.

Summer is a popular time for free workshops at area music dealers. Ask our local dealer if they ever sponsor teacher workshops. If they don't, encourage them to investigate this service for their customers.

### **Professional Organizations**

The educational opportunities for teachers, performance opportunities for students and great networking provided by these groups are well worth the membership dues.

**Music Teachers National Association (MTNA)** - The Carew Tower, 441 Vine Street, Suite 505, Cincinnati, OH 45202-2814. MTNA also operates on the state and local levels.

**National Guild Of Piano Teachers** - Teachers Division of American College of Musicians, P. O. Box 1807, Austin, TX 78767.

## Professional Magazines

There are four invaluable magazines for piano teachers.

Memberships in MTNA include a subscription to *The American Music Teacher*, a bi-monthly magazine with informative articles as well as organization news.

*Clavier* (200 Northfield Rd., Northfield, IL 60093), a monthly publication with articles on piano teaching, pianists, performance/interpretation. Also includes new music/book reviews and a question and answer column.

*Keyboard Companion* (P. O. Box 24-C-54, Los Angeles, CA 90024), "A Practical Magazine on Early-Level Piano Study." This quarterly magazine consistently presents helpful, practical advice and discussions by the country's most respected teachers.

*Piano & Keyboard* (P. O. Box 767, San Anselmo, CA 94979-0767), a bi-monthly publication that covers the piano and keyboards in their many roles in music today. Although not focused on teaching, it is an informative and entertaining magazine for those who love keyboard music.

## Internet Resources

With the advent of the 21st century no piano teacher needs to feel alone if they have a computer, modem, and access to the Internet.

**"The Piano Page"** (<http://www.prairienet.org/arts/ptg/homepage.html>) is an extensive and growing homepage from the Piano Technicians Guild. From this site one can be linked to organizations and publishers, teacher homepages, mailing lists, other Internet music resources. Be prepared to spend a long time exploring all the information available through this site.

Another free resource is a "listserv" for pianists and piano teachers called **"Piano-L Mailing List."** To subscribe send e-mail to: **Piano-L-Request@uamont.edu**. The body of your message should read: Subscribe Piano-L. You will then receive more daily e-mail than you can imagine, all of it postings of questions and all their answers from people around the world. I once posted a question about a composer's indications and had a qualified answer in ten minutes!

Whatever your situation as a piano teacher, a world of valuable resources is available to you. Even those with specific training and years of experience use these resources. It is our responsibility to our students to be the best, most qualified teacher we can be. One of the best things we can do for them and for ourselves is to be connected with other teachers and stay informed!✚

# DCE Expressions

Jeffrey Moeller

## *The Value In Teamwork*

**A**fter fifteen hours and 14,410 vertical feet, a rope team begins their descent of Washington's Mt. Rainier. As the team approaches Disappointment Clever, a mountaineer catches a crampon on the hard glacier ice and her body propels toward a 3000 ft. deep crevasse. The rope team that enabled her to summit earlier that day, immediately responds and succeeds in saving her life. The rope team functioned for that which it was designed. The team was able to summit and return safely because of the accumulative gifts, commitment and effort of its members.

By evidence of the continuing dialogue, formally and informally, the issue of team ministry and the values of teamwork are close to the church professional's heart. Most would agree, as does the business world, that teams can out perform individuals. Due to inadequate models and fragmented leadership, some church staffs are unable to manipulate teamwork to its greatest potential in the building up of the body of Christ. This is a significant presupposition as we engage in the work of making disciples. This article will attempt to spark greater dialogue concerning teamwork and team ministry. By identifying the obstacles and benefits of teamwork, church staffs can engage in the process of team building in a more intentional manner. This author believes commitment to the discipline and value of teamwork increases the potential effectiveness of making disciples for Christ. This in itself brings urgency to the discussion.

Let me preface with a definition of team and a brief theology of team ministry that influence this discussion. Team is *a small number of people with complementary skills, who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.* (Katzenbach/Smith pg. 45) Team ministry takes place in the church. The church is the body of Christ. It is a union of people of which Christ is the head. (Eph. 1:22,23 and 1 Cor. 12:12,14) Its function is to build the Body, employing spiritual gifts motivated by love. Eph. 4:11-16 and I Cor. 12:4-11, 28-30; I Cor. 13). It is through this lens that the following observations are made.

### **The Obstacles To Team Development And Performance**

A colleague of mine recently shared the comment, "Anyone who doesn't know what a 'team' is, would have to be an idiot." We each can recognize the obvious

components about teams. What is problematic is the ambiguity of how teams function and the values associated with teamwork. Each church worker brings to the table unique experiences that shape their understanding of teams and teamwork.

Many present day teams, much like our culture, tend to be orientated to individuals. We celebrate individual accomplishments, like the winning goal-scorer on a soccer team, or years of service to the church. Compensation is not connected to skills or the team structure. Teams tend to have hierarchal layers, and members are managed directly or left alone and not coached or facilitated. Job descriptions are specialized and narrow, not wholistic or shared. *Individuals work extraordinarily hard, but their efforts do not efficiently translate to team effort.* (Senge) Individual accountability is preferred to mutual or team accountability, creating an atmosphere of self-preservation. Teamwork, therefore, has become more of a cliché than a performance system or ethic.

There exists much skepticism and resistance to the team approach by those who manage. Much of this skepticism is based on a lack of confidence in a process that is a high risk and demands too much time. Depending on others with contrary points of view is uncomfortable, especially when mistakes are made. In addition team-building is a developmental process that demands discipline. The pressure of work habits and time schedules of team members interfere and weaken their resolve. Leaders often do not recognize the superior performance of teams because of these assumptions and past failures.

Another obstacle to the development of teams and teamwork is a weak organizational performance ethic. Performance ethic is a key component to the success of teams. A weak value as to the quality of effort or unequal commitment to performance dooms teams to failure. This weak ethic reveals itself in four different experiences: the unwillingness for team members to accept the consequences of their action or inaction; unclear or meaningless performance standards; a mission statement that is not compelling; and, finally, a concern for public relations that is greater than the commitment to goals. (Katzenbach/Smith) These deplete teams of trust and the ability to communicate openly.

## **The Superior Benefits Of Teamwork**

Teams are a diverse group of individuals whose environment is described as part of the body of Christ, a business and a social setting. In the initial stages, a team is not clearly attached and expectations are uncertain at best. When intentionally developed, teams are superior in rendering quality service and effective ministry. Key to this is the developing of common commitment to purpose, goals, approach and a covenant of mutual accountability.

## **Commitment To Purpose**

When a common purpose is understood and committed to by a team of people, great things can happen. The once diverse collection of individuals on the team become clearly linked with an identity. A working atmosphere is created that is value-driven. Conflict can be dealt with in a constructive manner. Affirmation, communication and trust have a greater opportunity to become real because individual interests are assimilated into the team. A common purpose builds ownership and breeds commitment. These wonderful results occur when teams invest a lot of time and energy in developing a common purpose.

## **Commitment To Common Goals**

A common purpose needs to be understood in a specific set of attainable goals. The commitment of a team to these goals is essential to teamwork. This connects action plans to the desired outcomes. It validates the contribution of each team member. Evaluations can be objective and clarify how each member can effectively contribute to the team. Clear goals also help keep teams focused on results. A commitment to common goals motivates individuals to work together as a team.

## **Commitment To Common Approach**

A common approach is simply how teams *will work together to accomplish their purpose*. (Katzenbach/Smith) It is important for work to be shared. Through this awareness, roles of leadership are discovered, learned and agreed to over the team-building process. This promotes trust and dialog that is constructive. These are essential to the team truly working together and accomplishing its goals.

## **Mutual Accountability**

A team cannot exist without the relationship of mutual accountability. This cannot be achieved through extortion or coercion but is a product of the development of commitment to a common purpose, goals and approach. Mutual accountability is the attitude of "we hold ourselves accountable." It is a promise of service, trust and commitment. The partnership that grows from this relationship enhances decision-making, problem-solving and the constructive resolution of conflict. Whereas performance shapes teams more than any other component, mutual accountability sustains teams. (Katzenbach/Smith)

## A Time To Redefine And Seek Answers

We, as a community of Church professionals, need to redefine team and teamwork, rethink leadership responsibilities and commit to the continuous process of team-building. We need to come to the realization that teamwork is not exclusive to teams nor are the values subscribed to adequate for effective team or individual performance. This involves seeking the answers to some critical questions. Among these are: What proficiencies do team members need to have? What are the vital components of a team ministry and how do they function? What are the values we associate with teamwork? What approaches are best suitable for team-building? What is the relationship between pastoral authority and administrative authority? How can we continually improve our efforts in making disciples? How can I best serve my teammates? Are we more concerned with protecting the tools of the Gospel than using them to build the kingdom? It is in the utilization of the cumulative gifts of a church staff or a volunteer workforce with a commitment to the discipline and values of teamwork that the effectiveness of making disciples increases. We, as a community professionals, with a solid spiritual foundation, need to continue to discuss this significant issue.✚

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### Prayer Links Students And God

Before starting the school day with prayer, Rita Yanoff asks her second grade students at Sussex (New Jersey) Christian School if they have prayer requests. The children respond with concerns about siblings, grandparents, pets, classmates, and a myriad of other things.

To keep track of all the requests, Yanoff has the students write them on strips of paper. As the kids observe God's answers to their prayer requests, they link together the strips of paper to form a prayer chain. Then they suspend the chain between the light fixtures in their classroom as a visible testimony to God's faithfulness.

The students' trust in their Heavenly Father grows as the chain lengthens. At the end of the last school year, the students took the prayer chain down and brought it outside to measure it. To their surprise they discovered that it was 350 feet long and contained 2,112 loops of answered prayers. The students' last prayer of the school year was short: "Thank you, Lord!"

--*Christian Home & School*, March/April 1997

# *Multiplying Ministries*

*Rich Bimler*

## *How Do You Spell C-E-L-E-B-R-A-T-E?*

**I**t really was an innocent mistake. There I was, rolling right along as I spelled out the word “CELEBRATE” to emphasize God’s love and forgiveness for all of us. The “I” in celebrate, represented “love,” and I emphasized Romans 8:38-39 which stresses that nothing will ever separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Wow, what a message! Evidently, I became so enthralled in my spelling that I moved from the “I” of celebrate to the “b” of celebrate, totally forgetting the letter “e.”

After the message was over, it suddenly hit me! I misspelled celebrate! How in the world did I manage to do that! What a dummy!

Then I thought the best thing to do was to wait to see how the people reacted to me after the service. As the adults, children and youth left the assembly, a number of them had some nice smiles and kind remarks about the message. I was beginning to feel pretty good again. But then reality struck--a little boy, seven or eight years old, came up and looked me straight in the eye and said, “You misspelled celebrate. You forgot one of the letters!”

Oh, the gifts that young children bring to us old and wise folks! “Out of the mouths of babes...” But the irony in all of this was that the letter I forgot, “e,” stood for “everyone.” God’s love is for everyone, for little kids who point out our faults and for us “big kids” who misspell words like “celebrate”!

It was a real learning for me. In my message, I was also trying to make the point that it sometimes is easier to accept God’s love generally, and to realize that He has taken care of the big things in life such as “death and life, angels and demons, present and future, and all of the other powers that try to take God’s love away from us. The struggle I sometimes have is that it is the “little things” in life, the times I goof up, the times I fail to love others, and even the times I misspell words, that prevent me from seeing the constant and unconditional forgiveness and love of Jesus Christ to each of us.

Thanks, little guy, for pointing out my faults so that I can better comprehend God’s unconditional love for me, even in the midst of misspellings. Thanks, for ministering to me and for helping me to experience God’s love in a real and honest way. Thanks, child of God, for sharing with me the joys and the realization that it doesn’t really matter how we spell c-e-l-e-t-a-t-e, but that the important thing is to know that we are loved and forgiven in the Lord, and by each other.

And with Romans 8:38-39 I can boldly say, “I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither present nor future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else”... even misspelling CELEBRATE, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord!

Now that’s what I call a real celebration--regardless of how I spell it!✠

# Secondary Sequence

Nathaniel Grunst

## Ready--Set--Internet

One computer, two computer, three computer, four, five computer, six computer, seven computer, MORE.....

A Report of the National Association of Secondary School Principals in partnership with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching on the high school of the 21st century, titled *BREAKING RANKS: Changing An American Institution*, contains a dozen significant recommendations that will affect our humble Lutheran high schools rather more quickly than we may wish.

Recommendation four, *TECHNOLOGY: Making Way For Electronic Learning*, states in summary form, "Technology is revolutionizing education and educators cannot afford to regard it as a frill or simply as an add-on. Careful planning should begin immediately in each high school to employ technology throughout the school and to integrate it into all aspects of the program. Boards of education must provide funds for the purchase of current technology and for enabling teachers to pursue ongoing education in technology."

Of course we have anticipated this for years (Haven't we?). This is a positive and not a thing to fear (Isn't it?). There are already schools out there that do this. We don't have to recreate the wheel. However, There are some schools that seem reluctant to face the rigors of this requisite change. It may be more accurate to say that there are some teachers with reluctance. °

It is hopeful if the individual reading these words is ready to make the effort. There are possibly very many who are not at all attracted to change of any kind. They, like the ostrich, may duly become aware; darkness does not measurably retard change.

In most schools, including our own Lutheran institutions, at least one or more serious decisions need to occur for us to be ready for that great race to survival in the 2000's.

How ready are we? Suggested preparations for each school:

- 1) Have a long-term strategic plan for using technology in the school.
- 2) Have a code of ethics and operative policies for orderly management controls.
- 3) Use technology in instruction and assessment as integral to the curriculum with accommodations for learning styles and individualization.



- 4) Be current in hardware, software, and have a continuous update formula with sufficient funding.
- 5) Guarantee access for all students and all staff.
- 6) Develop adequate in-service and continuing teacher education to provide staff with the skills and understandings required for information age schooling.
- 7) Employ a technology resource person to give technical assistance.

Is any school totally prepared? Is any school totally un-prepared? How urgent is this?

What are the enrollment trends in *your* school?

The motion toward technology in the classroom is frankly not driven from the top down. Administrators are not imposing another round of hyper-activities to keep the staff on their toes or simply off-balance. To say that this movement is driven from the bottom up, is not to suggest that teachers have gained control and want to cash in on the good life of robotic teacher driven classrooms. In this situation, the impetus frankly comes from the consumer: the student, the parent, the future employer who needs workers with far different skills than in the past.

We are in a situation of choice like Hamlet: To be or not to be. To do is to be. Not to do is a fatal option. The motive for serious change simply relates to your school's mission statement, which probably includes words to the effect of providing the students with enough skills to lead a life of effective discipleship. There is no question that the more effective and successful and wealthy disciple of the future will be highly literate in the computers and teamwork and problem solving skills that information age schooling can provide. Industrial age schooling especially without technology of any kind does not compete in the marketplace of skills. It is rather like the Amish way of life within modern agriculture; an interesting exercise but only in support of the very few who were born to it.

It is the heritage of our Lutheran education to be above average, to produce children who are above average, to maintain schools and programs that are very good and substantial and efficient. We are not of a mind to change that habit. But we did need to move from quill and ink bottle to ball point pens and recycled paper, from slates and blackboards to chalkboards and marker boards, from one-room schools to specialists and special use classrooms.

See you there (virtually) at <http://www.etc.lea//why.not?.com.†>

# *Teaching The Young*

*Shirley K. Morgenthaler*

## *Opening The Mind Of A Child: Part One*

**W**hat have you helped a child to *do* lately? How long have you waited for a child to *do* something for himself or herself? Have you listened to a child lately? Have you waited for the answer after you asked a child a question? Each of these questions identifies a challenge for most teachers. We tell, we ask, we sometimes wait. But do we also empower? Challenge? Open the mind of a child?

Opening the mind of a child. That's the real task of teaching. That, in fact, is at the heart of a relatively new approach to teaching young children--all children, in fact--called the *project approach*. This approach, spearheaded by Lilian Katz and Sylvia Chard, begins with the everyday world of the child and challenges the child to look more closely at that world. This approach attempts to deepen the child's understanding of everyday experiences. The approach promotes an in-depth study and questioning of the ordinary in order to make that ordinary more deeply understood.

In the project approach, the child's questions are at the heart of the curriculum. The project teacher uses those questions to create large and small investigations--projects--which then form the heart of what is going on throughout the day and the year. Not each child is working on the same project. In fact, that's the whole idea. Different children have different interests. So why shouldn't they be learning different things?

Did I write something wrong? Did I really mean that? **YES!!** Where is it written that every child needs to learn the same thing? Even if that were a desirable goal, it would be virtually impossible!

In the project approach, the goal is the open and engaged mind of the child. The curious mind. The questioning mind. A second goal is a deepened understanding and appreciation of the everyday. Another goal is intellectual development. Not mountains or bits of information. Intellectual development. A growing *mind*!

Children come to us ready and eager to learn. They ask questions, they listen, they investigate, they try things out. Did you ever meet a toddler who wasn't a scientist on two determined feet? The adults get in the way. They say things like "Wait!" "This is how this is done," and "This is what you need to know."

One of the basic questions teachers need to ask is "What *should* children know and do?" My question to you is even more fundamental. Are there any universal

“shoulds” for all children? What about the interests of individual children? All of us have stories of children who had a passion for bugs or space research or helping other people. These same stories include endings in which these children-grown-up have become biologists, space researchers and social workers.

Does that really happen? If you have been teaching long enough to see your former pupils graduate from college, you know that it does. In fact, it has happened with my own children. As I look back to their interests as young children, I can see the seeds of the careers they each have chosen.

So why are we so afraid to capitalize on those interests? Why are we afraid to capitalize on the child’s passions? Why can’t learning be fun *each* year?

There are really four categories of learning goals, according to Katz and Chard. These are knowledge, skills, dispositions, feelings. Let’s take a look at each of these in some depth.

Knowledge includes the facts and ideas we form and accumulate as we investigate the world around us. The difference from the project approach standpoint is the perspective on how that knowledge develops. Knowledge develops from the inside out, not the reverse. It moves from the specific to the general, from the behavioral (doing) to the representational (understanding and conceptualizing). Knowledge moves from what the child already knows to what the child is interested in knowing.

Skills include a variety of competencies. The question here is whether skills are practiced for the sake of mastery, or whether they are applied to a real problem or project in which the child is interested and engaged. The real question is *which* skills.

Everyone has a favorite set of skills for young children to learn. Let me give you the Katz-and-Chard perspective. They say that there are really only two important skills. These are social competence and communication competence. To put this another way, if the child has the skills of getting along effectively and communicating with others effectively, all the other skills will fall into place as the child is engaged with learning. Communication competence has several sub-points. These include listening, turn-taking, and the ability to engage in meaningful conversations. (We all know adults who still have problems with these!)

The adult’s task in fostering communication competence is to ask the right kind of questions. Most of us ask questions of interrogation. That includes the “what,” “how many,” and “where” questions. These questions interrogate for the purpose of checking to see what the child knows in relation to what the teacher thinks the child should know. However, the supportive type of question is solicitation. These questions attempt to draw out the child’s perspective and imagination. They ask “Why,” and “How could we,” “Is there another way.” These questions genuinely look for the child’s original thinking, not a guessing game of “What does the

teacher want.”

The Katz-and-Chard perspective does not eliminate academic skills, but looks on them as the by-products of a lively classroom rather than the goal. From this perspective, children learn the skills of reading and writing and mathematical relationships because they are necessary for the projects they are investigating, not because they are important in and of themselves.

The real difference in the Katz-and-Chard perspective, however, is in the notion of dispositions. These are habits of action, personality traits, and act-frequencies. We become a certain type of person because we act in certain ways. We become curious because we act that way. We become persistent because we develop the habit of action. We value task completion because we do it often enough to gain satisfaction from it. We develop interest because we have interesting things to do.

Every child deserves a teacher who cares about dispositions. Every child needs a teacher who works to keep positive dispositions alive. Every child needs a classroom in which the disposition-destroyers are kept at a minimum. Those disposition-destroyers include rewards, drills, and interruptions. Are you guilty?

Additional dispositions include the willingness to expend and sustain effort, the determination to work to mastery, and the zest to be challenge-seeking. These are supported by learning goals rather than performance goals. Children need to have the gift of seeking their own internal rewards for their efforts rather than to be dependent on external validation of them. According to Katz and Chard, rewards and praise actually get in the way of true learning.

Social dispositions are another part of the Katz and Chard model. These social dispositions include helpfulness, charitableness, and the appreciation of the efforts of others. These social dispositions require social settings to support their development. Children do not learn these social dispositions in an atmosphere of competition or even individualism.

Feelings are the fourth category of learning goals, according to Katz and Chard. Feelings are the subjective, emotional or affective states of the child. These feelings or emotional states powerfully influence the development of knowledge and of skills. They also impact the development of positive dispositions.

Each of these four learning-goal categories provides a part of the foundation for what the child actually learns on a day-to-day basis. Once the foundation is in place, learning can happen. That’s where curriculum and the project approach come into play. However, the limitations of space for this column do not allow for me to complete that half of the equation. That’s part two of this discussion. Stay tuned. Your next copy of the journal will continue the journey of opening a child’s mind.✚

**Author’s Note:** The following books will be useful for exploring the project approach:

Katz, L.G., & Chard, S.C. (1989). *Engaging children's minds: The project approach*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.

Chard, S. C. (1992). *The project approach: A practical guide for teachers*. Edmonton, ALTA: Sylvia C. Chard.

Chard, S.C. (1994). *The project approach: A second practical guide for teachers*. Edmonton, ALTA: Sylvia C. Chard.

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**The Educational Development Department of Concordia Publishing House (CPH)** in cooperation with Concordia College, Seward, NE, and Concordia Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN, will offer its popular "Writing for the Church" workshops this summer at Concordia, Seward, NE, June 22-28, 1997 and at Concordia, Ft. Wayne, IN, July 27-August 2, 1997. The workshop in Seward will be staffed by The Rev. Dr. Earl H. Gaulke, CPH Vice President of the Editorial Division and Jane Fryar, Editor of Indepth Bible Study Materials and popular author. The workshop in Ft. Wayne will be staffed by Dr. Gaulke and Rodney Rathmann, Editor of Day/Weekday School and Materials for Adult Education.

Workshop objectives include helping participants to:

- (1) know the elements of effective written communication;
- (2) recognize the need for effective written communication in the church, and by the church for the world;
- (3) develop creative writing and editing skills through regular practice; and
- (4) commit themselves to witnessing through the written word as they communicate the Good News of grace and forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

"The workshop will be sufficiently flexible so that the participants may choose areas of special or personal interest," said Dr. Gaulke. Areas to be covered include the writing of religion lesson materials for all levels and agencies of Christian education; feature and news articles; devotional literature; family and children's literature; audio and video scripts.

Concordia, Seward, will award 1-1/2 semester hours of graduate or undergraduate credit to participants for either workshop (\$225 tuition and fees). Or the workshop may be taken for continuing education units (CEU) (\$225). On-campus lodging and meals for the week will be \$155 at Seward. At Ft. Wayne: Lodging plus ten meals is \$120; lodging plus twelve meals is \$130; lodging plus seventeen meals is \$155. Participants will also need to purchase a textbook.

Mail your application for the workshop in Seward directly to: Writing for the Church Workshop, c/o Dr. LeeRoy Holtzen, Concordia College, 800 N. Columbia Ave., Seward, NE 68434 (Phone: 402/643-7471) (Alternate phone: 402/643-7230) [FAX: 402/643-4073] [E-Mail: [lholtzen@seward.ccsn.edu](mailto:lholtzen@seward.ccsn.edu)]. To attend the workshop in Ft. Wayne, mail your application directly to: Writing for the Church Workshop, c/o Dr. William Weinrich, Concordia Theological Seminary, 6600 N. Clinton St., Ft. Wayne, IN 46825, (Phone: 219/452-2103) [FAX: 219/452-2121]. Each workshop limited to 20 participants.

# *The Gospel According To Winnie-The-Pooh*

*Philip Heinze*

## *Chapter Five In Which We Share A Smackrel*

I like to cook and so most of the time I do. However, I occasionally tire of fixing proper dinners, a proper dinner being one that wears sensible shoes, if you know what I mean. Meat and Potatoes and Green Vegetables and the like. Proper dinners are good for you, in a balanced sort of way. A bit of something from every group served up on a proper dinner plate with a glass of milk on the side.

My mother served proper dinners in a casserole form. A casserole being a sort of group hug for the four food groups. This would normally be a good thing, seeing as you only have one dish to wash, except that the group hug is such a bonding experience that a good portion of the casserole stays behind and only hours of therapy can get it to let go.

Fish, lean pork, and skinless chicken are very sensible things to eat, so I usually marinate them overnight or cook them in lots of butter. Wouldn't want too much of a good thing, you know.

And then there is pasta. A lovely Italian invention for gaining weight. Pasta, which means something like "to paste to one's ribs," comes in all shapes and sizes and is especially good smothered in any number of different sauces. When it comes to sauces I especially like to make a rich, red sauce with mild Italian sausage, black olives, green peppers, Romano tomatoes, fresh garlic, a splash of Bordeaux, a pinch of oregano and a fistful of basil. And, of course, no pasta meal at the Heinze's is complete without Pillsbury Bread sticks brushed with melted butter and garnished with fresh pressed garlic.

Dinner at the Heinze's is actually quite interesting and varied and, if I do say so myself, quite tasty. However, there are those times when I just can't get motivated to prepare dinner, proper or otherwise. When nothing seems worth fixing Lisa and I look at each other and say, in a questioning sort of way, "How about a smackrel?"

A smackrel is Pooh-ese for "a little bit of something." For Lisa and me it means wandering up and down the isles at Food Lion and picking out little bits of somethings. Lisa is particularly fond of those tiny ears of corn, while I prefer a tin of smoked oysters. In the end we each have a half dozen or so little tins of this and little jars of that. It's not particularly nutritious, in a proper meal sort of way, but it is particularly friendly to weary spirits.

*Oh I like this way of talking,*

*Yes I do.  
It's the nicest way of talking  
Just for two.  
And a Help-yourself with Rabbit  
Though it may become a habit,  
Is a pleasant sort of habit  
For a Pooh.*

*(The House At Pooh Corner by A.A. Milne; E.P. Dutton & Co., New York; 1956, p.58)*

A smackrel night is a pleasant sort of habit for Lisa and me. Perhaps because picking out silly things and calling them dinner is an adventure and a little frivolous and quite a bit child-like. But it is that break from the routine and the commonplace and the everyday that makes it special. It is a shared meal served on crackers and little bits of toast with a nice bottle of something from Robert Mondavi's vineyard. No hot stove, no pots or pans or proper dishes to clean; just a little bit of something shared with someone you love.

*"On the night in which he was betrayed our Lord Jesus took bread... This is my body given for you. This is my blood shed for you."*

The words of institution are an invitation, an invitation to partake in a pleasant sort of habit; a little bit of something that is not particularly nutritious, and certainly not filling, but somehow mysteriously refreshing for the weary soul. So take and eat and tomorrow, get back in the kitchen.✚

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### **Talent Scouts**

Sometimes parents think they can spot world-class talent in their young children. How can parents nurture their kids' interests and abilities without becoming overbearing? Here's some advice from the *Bell*, the newsletter of Zeeland (Michigan) Christian School.

- Let talent come out naturally; don't force it.
- Encourage a disciplined and organized schedule so your child can practice as part of a regular routine.
- Work with your child. Children under ten years of age can't be expected to practice by themselves.
- Provide rewards and encouragement, but make sure your children don't think you love them just for their achievements.
- Don't let your children sacrifice the rest of their education to focus on just one talent.

## *A Final Word*

*George C. Heider, President*  
Concordia University, River Forest, Illinois

### *"Light From A Box?"*

**L**ike many families these days, mine has joined the computer age. We have a microcomputer in our basement, complete with a variety of home office software programs, games, and a link to the Internet and World Wide Web. Just last week, though, we crossed a psychological Rubicon (for me, at least), as we bought the current edition of the encyclopedia which I had used as a child, only on two compact disks.

As I've watched my children begin using this new tool for their schoolwork, I confess to some sense of loss. I recall fondly curling up with individual volumes of the encyclopedia during my own school days, just reading whatever hit my fancy at the moment. It is quite possible that I was simply weird in this respect, but, if so, I married the right woman, as she has the same memories. We talked a lot about what was being gained and lost, as we decided between purchasing the CD-version of the encyclopedia and the print version (at roughly ten times the cost). We opted for the computer, but we do wonder whether our children will recall leisure hours before a cathode ray tube with quite the fondness we have for the books.

As a matter of fact, they just might. More importantly, they can with far greater ease follow a topic wherever it leads, at least within the bounds of this particular encyclopedia. When one adds in the far vaster resources of the World Wide Web, the possibilities become truly exciting. With the addition of the Internet, and electronic mail, there is added the potential dimension of future conversations with other students and teachers, that is, of collaborative learning, unbounded by schedules and space.

Yet there's a danger here which requires our close attention as parents and teachers. I'm not speaking of the materials on the Web which are obscene or otherwise inappropriate for children (or adults!), or of the twisted few who have sought to exploit e-mail conversations with minors. A combination of adult engagement and guidance can deal with these adequately. Rather, I am concerned that we equip our children and students to *sift* and *discern* among that which they read, see, and hear. If anything, a slogan of the '60s, "Question Authority," is more needed than ever today, as much of what appears in sources which may be consulted for research has gone through little screening, scholarly or otherwise. My call is neither for censorship nor for a post-modern scepticism about the possibility of "truth." Instead, it is our challenge to expose our children and students in age-



appropriate ways to the phenomena of perspective and bias, while helping them also to see that an appreciation for a variety of views and for the human component of knowledge does not relieve us of the responsibility to think critically and to live by a set of values grounded in our faith in Jesus Christ.

So long as we've got that straight, I say, let 'em curl up with the box or the book—or better, both.✚

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### ***Farewell Dr. Wayne Lucht***

With this issue we bid farewell to Dr. Wayne Lucht as editor. In his ten years in that post, Wayne has served both his University and his readership well, providing a space for a variety of voices around the general concept of a scholarly journal of theology, written with the practicing Lutheran educator in mind. On behalf of all his faculty colleagues, in whose name--*Lutheran Education*-- is published, I offer both thanks and prayers for God's blessings to Wayne and Phyllis, as he enters real, full retirement from his duties at Concordia at last.

....George C. Heider

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